

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

A History of Guelaguetza in Zapotec Communities of the Central Valleys of Oaxaca,

16th Century to the Present

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in History

by

Xóchitl Marina Flores-Marcial

2015

© Copyright by

Xóchitl Marina Flores-Marcial

2015

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A History of Guelaguetza in Zapotec Communities of the Central Valleys of Oaxaca,
16th Century to the Present

by

Xóchitl Marina Flores-Marcial

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2015

Professor Kevin B. Terraciano, Chair

My project traces the evolution of the Zapotec cultural practice of *guelaguetza*, an indigenous sharing system of collaboration and exchange in Mexico, from pre-Columbian and colonial times to the present. Ironically, the term "guelaguetza" was appropriated by the Mexican government in the twentieth century to promote an annual dance festival in the city of Oaxaca that has little to do with the actual meaning of the indigenous tradition. My analysis of Zapotec-language alphabetic sources from the Central Valley of Oaxaca, written from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, reveals that Zapotecs actively participated in the sharing system during this long period of transformation. My project demonstrates that the Zapotec sharing economy functioned to build and reinforce social networks among households in Zapotec communities. I argue that *guelaguetza* enabled communities of the Central Valley of Oaxaca to survive the trauma of conquest, depopulation, and external demands for local resources. Zapotecs relied on the system to maintain control of valuable community resources, such as property, labor, and

agricultural goods. My project also examines the system of *guelaguetza* from a transnational perspective by considering how it continues to function effectively for Zapotecs outside of Oaxaca, in other parts of Mexico and in the United States, especially in California. The project utilizes a range of unpublished archival sources from Mexico, Spain, and the United States, including Spanish- and Zapotec-language legal documents, municipal records, and chronicles. Finally, I incorporate Mexican literature from the early twentieth century, and modern ethnographic observations from Oaxaca and California.

The dissertation of Xóchitl Marina Flores Marcial is approved.

Pamela Munro

Teófilo Ruiz

Kevin B. Terraciano, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2015

Para los zapotecos, de ayer, de hoy y de siempre.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	vii
Vita	x
Introduction:	1
The Zapotec of the Central Valley of Oaxaca	
<i>Spanish Entrance into the Central Valley of Oaxaca</i>	
<i>Oaxacan Indigenous Historiography</i>	
<i>Chapter Overview</i>	
Chapter 1:	27
Zapotec Historical Records	
<i>Zapotec Discourse</i>	
<i>Zapotec Literacy Before the Spanish Conquest</i>	
<i>Zapotec Culture and Society Through a Spanish Imperial Lens</i>	
<i>Colonial-Era Zapotec Documents</i>	
<i>Conclusion</i>	
Chapter 2:	57
Zapotec Community and Society	
<i>From Pre-Columbian Elites to Colonial Administrators</i>	
<i>The Cabildo and its Leaders</i>	
<i>The Secular-Sacred Hierarchy</i>	
<i>The Cofradía</i>	
<i>Hereditary and Earned Leadership Positions</i>	
<i>Zapotec Households</i>	
<i>A Celebration in the Queche</i>	
<i>Conclusion</i>	
Chapter 3:	90
Guelaguetza, a Zapotec Code of Conduct	
<i>The Pre-Columbian Foundations of Guelaguetza</i>	
<i>Zapotec Traditions under Colonial Rule</i>	
<i>Cargos and Tequio</i>	
<i>The Practical and Social Functions of Guelaguetza</i>	
Chapter 4:	119
The Queche of Tlacolula vs. don Domingo de Mendoza	
<i>Don Domingo's Cacicazgo within the Marquesado del Valle</i>	
<i>Don Domingo de Mendoza, Cacique y Gobernador de Tlacolula</i>	
<i>Común y República de Tlacolula</i>	
<i>The Case Against don Domingo</i>	
<i>Conclusion: The Cacique's Punishment</i>	

Chapter 5:	152
The Enduring Legacy of Guelaguetza	
<i>Twentieth Century Transformations</i>	
<i>Transnational Zapotec Expressions of Collaboration and Exchange</i>	
Bibliography	161

Acknowledgements

This dissertation is the result of a wonderful network of comradeship, family and friendship. I am deeply grateful to my academic advisors and the institutions in Mexico as well as in the United States that opened their doors to me. I am eternally thankful to my friends and family who provided unconditional love and emotional support throughout this process.

I would like to thank my advisor Kevin Terraciano for always supporting and inspiring my work. As an undergraduate student at UCLA, I took my first course on colonial Mexican history with Kevin—the first time I had ever heard Oaxaca mentioned in an academic environment. His teaching and mentorship provided the initial spark that fueled my desire to study the history of my ancestors. I am also greatly indebted to my dissertation committee Pam Munro, Teo Ruiz, William Summerhill, and John M. D. Pohl for their generosity and dedication in guiding me in this project. Their scholarship has truly served as a model for my dissertation and an endless source of personal and professional inspiration.

At UCLA I was surrounded by scholars in various fields who provided conversation, instigated laughter and whose work served as further models for my research—Robin Derby and Andrew Apter, Cecelia Klein, Charlene Villaseñor, José Moya, Carlo Ginzburg, the late John Skirius and the late Teshome Gabriel. Their areas of expertise allowed me to open new lines of inquiry in my work. Throughout this process, I have formed meaningful friendships with colleagues, including Aaron Olivas and Luis Muñoz, Luis Sanchez-López, Elizabeth Gonzalez, Daina Sanchez, Sabine Schlosser and Rebecca Zamora. Their willingness to collaborate and exchange ideas, laughter, archival documents and travel is priceless. Certainly, graduate school

would have been less exciting without the company of Luis Antonio Domínguez Ramírez, who always had a scientific response to my historical questions.

In Oaxaca and Mexico, colleagues and *paisanos* also provided me with multiple forms of support. María de los Ángeles Romero-Frizzi spoke to me about Central Valley documents in the Archivo General de las Indias in Seville early on. Her suggestions lessened the daunting task of figuring out where to begin. Michel Oudijk and Bas van Doesburg who I met with at UNAM and the Biblioteca de Investigación Juan de Córdova were incredibly generous and supportive during my many visits. I owe several academic *guelaguetza* debts to my *paisanos*, Zeferino Mendoza and family in Teotitlán del Valle, the *autoridades* of San Lucas Quiaviní, Ignacio Santiago and family in San Felipe Güilá and the *autoridades* of San Bartolomé Quialana, Victor Cata and Natalia Toledo in Juchitán.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the mighty “Zapotexts,” an interdisciplinary research team of linguists and historians dedicated to the study of colonial Zapotec documents, where I have felt at home since 1999. The experience I gained from working closely with such academic superstars is truly priceless. The Zapotexts are not only colleagues, but also mentors and dear friends. I would like to thank them for allowing me to incorporate our collective findings in my work. I will always be thankful to Aaron Broadwell, Michael Galant, Brook Lillehaugen María Ornelas, Pam Munro, Aaron Sonnenschein, Diana Schwartz, Lisa Sousa, Kevin Terraciano and the people who attended the weekly meetings over the course of many years. The Zapotexts scholarship has profoundly changed my scholarship. *X’tiosu!*

I am grateful for the numerous grants that made my research possible. The UCLA Department of History Cota Robles Fellowship and the UC Mexus-CONACYT Grant sponsored my research in Seville and Mexico. The Latin American Institute at UCLA and the Center for the

Study of Women at UCLA sponsored research travel to Oaxaca and for conference presentations. The UCLA Graduate Division Summer Research Grant was instrumental in providing the financial resources for summer archival research trips to Mexico City and Oaxaca. The Mellon Institute Program for Spanish Paleography summer program at the Huntington Library provided much needed practice and training for reading my colonial documents. The Foreign Language Area Studies at UCLA's Latin American Center grant allowed me to study Portuguese colonialism and to become fluent in Portuguese. And last but not least, as a guest researcher at the Getty Research Institute's Scholars Program in the summers of 2014 and 2015, I was encouraged to polish a finished draft of this dissertation. I offer my most sincere gratitude to all the individuals at these institutions who made these experiences possible.

As a member of the Zapotec community, I am indebted to my pueblo Tlacolula de Matamoros, Oaxaca and the people there who insisted that I finish this dissertation so that we could finally have a source to know our own history. I would like to thank and acknowledge my late grandparents: my paternal grandparents who were forced to disguise their indigenous roots and become mestizos, Ysidro Flores Cruz and Celestina Rios Manzano; and my maternal grandparents Petrona Garcia Quiñones and Andres Marcial Vásquez, Zapotecs who were physically punished by government and church officials for speaking their native language but who spoke it until their last breath. I also would like to thank my strong and wonderful family: my siblings, Luis, Daniel, Adriana and Juana for their love and support; my nephews and niece, Tenochzin, Teotzin, Fabián, Julio and Lupe who brightened my darkest days; and my parents Rufina Marcial García and Nicolas Flores Rios who left their native community with courage and hearts filled with hope. I can never say enough GRACIAS for their love, support, understanding and countless sacrifices!

Vita

- 2002 BA, Latin American Studies
University of California, Los Angeles
Los Angeles, CA
- 2005 MA, History
University of California, Los Angeles
Los Angeles, CA

Presentations and Publications

Munro, Pamela, Kevin Terraciano, Xóchitl Flores Marcial, Michael R. Galant, Aaron Huey Sonnenschein, Diana Schwartz. “Un testamento zapoteco del valle de Oaxaca, 1616.” (manuscript)

Flores Marcial, Xóchitl and Kevin Terraciano. “El Poder de la Pluma,” in Rosa María Rojas Torres and Francisco Arellanes, eds., *Estudios Zapotecos* (Mexico City: UNAM-INAH, 2015). (in review)

Flores Marcial, Xóchitl. Review of *Re-Creating Primordial Time: Foundation Rituals and Mythology in the Postclassic Maya Codices* by Gabrielle Vail and Christine Hernandez, in *Sophia: the International Journal of Philosophy and Traditions*. (forthcoming)

“Una breve historia de la guelaguetza: intercambio recíproco y responsabilidad social entre los zapotecos.” Paper presented in the municipal palace of Teotitlán del Valle (Oaxaca, MX), December 2014.

“La guelaguetza al centro de un conflicto del pueblo zapoteco de Tlacolula al final del siglo XVI.” Paper presented at the XIV Reunión Internacional de Historiadores de México, Centro Katz, University of Chicago (Chicago, IL), September 2014.

“Indigenous Traditions in the U.S. Southwest: Oaxacan Culture Across International Borders.” Paper presented at the conference Rudolfo Anaya: Tradition, Modernity, and the Literatures of the U.S. Southwest, California State University Los Angeles (Los Angeles, CA), May 2014.

“Indigenous Affairs in Colonial Oaxaca: the Limits of Spanish Authority in the Zapotec Cabildos of the Central Valley 1700-1800.” Paper presented at the 127th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association (New Orleans, LA), January 2013.

“The Importance of Barter and Exchange: the Practice of Guelaguetza in Central Valley Communities.” Paper presented at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Los Angeles, CA), June 2012.

“The Zapotec Tradition of Guelaguetza in Colonial Oaxaca.” Paper presented at the 30th Annual Meeting of the Latin American Studies Association (San Francisco, CA), May 2012.

“Guelaguetza Loans and Payments: Zapotec Organization of Community Affairs.” Paper presented at the 124th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association (San Diego, CA), January 2010.

“La Guelaguetza en la documentación de los zapotecos de Oaxaca colonial.” Paper presented at the Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia (Mexico City, MX), November 2009.

“Zapotec Systems of Reciprocity in the Tlacolula Arm of the Oaxacan Central Valley: A Look into the Distribution of Local Resources in Colonial Oaxaca.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Society for Ethnohistory (New Orleans, LA), October 2009.

“A Valley Zapotec Text from 1614: What It Tells Us (Colonial Oaxaca: a Portrait of Daily Life).” Paper presented at the Conference on Mesoamerica, California State University Los Angeles (Los Angeles, CA), May 2009.

“The History of Indigenous People’s Movement in Oaxaca Mexico.” Paper presented at La Calle Grita Conference at the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History (Los Angeles, CA), October 2008.

“Testamentos zapotecos: la historia dentro del lenguaje indígena.” Paper presented at the Coloquio María Teresa Fernández de Miranda (Oaxaca, MX), April 2008.

“Documentos de la Historia de Tlacolula.” Paper presented at the Presentación de la Revista *Humanidades* (Oaxaca, MX), November 2007.

Flores-Marcial, Xóchitl. “Epidemia y rebelión en el Valle de Oaxaca,” in *Revista Humanidades* (Oaxaca, MX: Instituto de Investigaciones en Humanidades de la Universidad Autónoma “Benito Juárez” de Oaxaca, September 2007).

“Documents from the Archivo General de la Nación (Mexico City), Oaxaca State Archive, and Native Community Sources.” Paper presented at the conference Sources for the Study of Native People (Berkeley, CA), March 2006.

“Valley Zapotecs in Colonial Antequera (Oaxaca City).” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Society for Ethnohistory (Santa Fe, NM), November 2005.

““Todo el Pueblo en Forma de Tumulto se Arrojó al Hospital y han sacado todos los enfermos”: the Threat of Contagion and Rebellion in a Oaxacan Native Community.” Paper presented at the 36th Annual Meeting of the Society for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies (Charleston, SC), November 2005.

INTRODUCTION

The Zapotec of the Central Valleys of Oaxaca

Located in the southwest of the country, Oaxaca is Mexico's fifth largest state and is home to sixteen officially recognized indigenous cultures and four distinct language families.¹ The state is divided into *ocho regiones* (eight regions) which include La Cañada, La Costa, Cuenca del Papaloapan, El Istmo, La Mixteca, La Sierra Norte, La Sierra Sur and Los Valles Centrales — eight regions that are defined in terms of their distinct geography, language, natural resources, cuisine, and culture. This study focuses on one of these eight regions, the Central Valleys, where humans have lived continuously for at least eleven thousand years.² The earliest known domesticated plants on the continent which include beans, squash and *teosinte* (a predecessor of maize) were documented in this region.³ The word “Zapotec” is used to describe one of the societies native to Oaxaca; this word also refers to the people's language and culture. Today, Central Valley Zapotecs speak at least sixteen languages that stem from the same proto-Zapotecan roots of the Otomanguean language family. The colonial communities studied in this dissertation spoke variants of these languages and, today, the descendant languages of the

¹ See Raymond Gordon Jr., *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* (SIL International; Fifteenth edition, 2005).

² Kent V Flannery, Guilá Naquitz: Archaic Foraging and Early Agriculture in Oaxaca, Mexico (Orlando: Academic Press, 1986). Joyce Marcus and Kent Flannery have also studied the region and claim that the people who settled and developed complex urban societies in the “greatest expanse of level land in highland Oaxaca can be found in the Central Valley System at an average elevation of 1500 meters.” Joyce Marcus and Kent V Flannery, *Zapotec Civilization: How Urban Society Evolved in Mexico's Oaxaca Valley* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), 9.

³ Kent V Flannery, *Guilá Naquitz: Archaic Foraging and Early Agriculture in Oaxaca, Mexico* (Orlando: Academic Press, 1986).

colonial Zapotec, like most indigenous languages of the Americas, are threatened with extinction.⁴

There are four separate Zapotec ethnic groups in Oaxaca, the Northern Sierra, the Southern Sierra, the Isthmus and the Central Valley Zapotec. Central Valley Zapotecs called themselves *benizaa* or *penihualache* in their own language, thus the term "Zapotec" appears to be a misnomer, as is the case with many other indigenous societies.⁵ The use of Zapotec to refer to the *benizaa* people began before the Spanish arrived in Oaxaca. The Nahuatl (Aztecs) who developed important economic and political ties in the region and ultimately colonized several towns were likely responsible for the term.⁶ "Zapotec" was adopted by the Spaniards at their arrival. On November 11, 1580 the Dominican friar Juan de Mata replied to the census questionnaire ordered by the Spanish King Philip II, called the *Relaciones Geográficas*. Mata described the community of Teozapotlan (also known as Zaachila) as the main governing center of the region but did not include information about the origins of the place names.⁷ A different friar who lived in the seventeenth century, a Dominican named Francisco de Burgoa, provided

⁴ See Heriberto Avelino, John Foreman, Pamela Munro and Aaron Huey Sonnenchein, "Covert Subjects in Zapotecan." Paper presented at SSILA Annual Meeting, Boston, 2004. For specific examples of shared grammatical traits in several Zapotec language variants, see also Ma. Teresa Fernández de Miranda, Michael J Piper, and Doris A Bartholomew, *El protozapoteco* (México, D.F.: El Colegio de México, Centro de Estudios Lingüísticos y Literarios: Instituto Nacional de Antropología é Historia, 1995).

⁵ The Aztecs, for example, did not call themselves "Aztec"; they tended to associate with their *altepetl* names, such as Mexica-Tenochca, Tlatelolca, Tlaxcalteca. In reference to the Zapotec, some scholars have used the term *benizaa*, but *penihualache* is the term attested in Zapotec-language documents from the colonial period. Zapotec-language documents also used the term *peniqueche* when referring to inhabitants of a *quiche* or community.

⁶ Joyce Marcus and Kent Flannery observed that Zapotec is derived from the Nahuatl word *zapotecatl*, a misrepresentation of the Zapotec word *zaa* that people used to refer to "clouds". They wrote: "The Aztecs made a phonetic rather than a semantic translation of the *zaa*." Thus, it is the name by which four different culture and language groups in Oaxaca have come to be known. See Kent V Flannery and Joyce Marcus, *The Cloud People: Divergent Evolution of the Zapotec and Mixtec Civilizations* (New York: Academic Press, 1983), xxi.

⁷ Footnote 3 by Acuña expands on the lack of coherence in Mata's explanation of Zapotecatl and its etymology. Fray Juan de Mata declared, "Zapotlan, que es el nombre desta provincia; que se llama Zapotecatl en mexicano porque allí era la cabeza de toda esta provincia, de muchos años que no hay memoria". See René Acuña, *Relaciones Geográficas Del Siglo XVI / Edición de René Acuña.*, 1a ed. (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, 1984). Tomo Segundo, 157.

more information. Burgoa wrote that the people called themselves *beni zaa* which may be translated as “people of the clouds”.⁸ Zapotecs spoke a language called *Tichazaa*. *Ticha* is Zapotec for “word,” qualified by *zaa*, meaning “words from the clouds”. The other Zapotec societies speak different variants of Zapotec and live in very separate and distant places. While it is very difficult to determine how many variants of Zapotec were spoken in the Valley in the sixteenth century when the Spanish arrived, it is safe to say that modern-day Zapotec languages spoken in Oaxaca are as different as Romance languages spoken in Europe.

Most studies of the Central Valley have focused on its pre-Colombian past. The Classic-period Zapotec site of Monte Albán, which overlooks Oaxaca City and the Valley, has attracted numerous investigations since Alfonso Caso and other anthropologists and archaeologists began to work there in the 1920s.⁹ Scholars have used monumental remains and preconquest-style writings (*codices* and *lienzos*) to reconstruct Zapotec and Mixtec political alliances and dynastic genealogies in the Postclassic period. They have examined splendid mural paintings found in ceremonial burial sites such as Mitla, Zaachila and Lambityeco.¹⁰ These studies confirmed the existence of elite groups in these pre-colonial societies.¹¹ In general, there are several good

⁸ As quoted in Michel R Oudjik, *Historiography of the Bènzàa*, CNWS Publications, v. 84 (Leiden: Research School of Asian, Africa, and Amerindian Studies, Universiteit Leiden, 2000), 9.

⁹ See the archaeological studies of Oaxaca by Alfonso Caso et al. *El Tesoro de Monte Albán, Memorias del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* (Mexico, D.F.; INAH, 1969); Alfonso Caso, *Urnas De Oaxaca, Memorias Del Instituto Nacional de Antropología E Historia 2* (México: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1952). Marcus Winter and Martínez, Cira L., *Entierros humanos de Monte Albán: dos estudios* (Oaxaca, México: Proyecto Especial Monte Albán: Centro INAH Oaxaca, 1995). And See also John Paddock’s contribution in Kent V Flannery and Joyce Marcus, *The Cloud People: Divergent Evolution of the Zapotec and Mixtec Civilizations* (New York: Academic Press, 1983), 170-175.

¹⁰ John M.D. Pohl, *The Politics of Symbolism in the Mixtec Codices*, Vanderbilt University Publications in Anthropology, no. 46 (Nashville, Tenn: Vanderbilt University, 1994); John M. D Pohl and Mixtec Pictographic Writing Workshop at Texas, *The Lintel Paintings of Mitla and Other Frescoes* (Austin, Tex.: Maya Workshop Foundation, 2000).

¹¹ For scholarship on genealogies see, Michel Oudjik, “Una Nueva Historia Zapoteca” in *Secretos del Mundo Zapoteca* Eva E. Ramírez Gasga (ed.). (Tehuantepec e Ixtepec, Oaxaca: Universidad del Istmo, 2008), 267-

studies of the Central Valley Zapotec in the Colonial period, but few in comparison to those on the preconquest period.¹² This dissertation seeks to help fill that historiographical hole.

Zapotec-language documents constitute an important source of information in this dissertation. As philological studies of Nahuatl, Maya and Mixtec-language sources have demonstrated, virtually every aspect of social and cultural history must be re-examined in the light of new information from indigenous writings.¹³ Thus, my use of Zapotec-language writings

321. Also see, John M.D. Pohl, *The Legend of Lord Eight Deer: An Epic of Ancient Mexico* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); John Paddock, *Lord 5 Flower's Family: Rulers of Zaachila and Cuilapan* (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University, 1983); Michel R Oudijk, *Historiography of the Bènzàa*, CNWS Publications, v. 84 (Leiden: Research School of Asian, Africa, and Amerindian Studies, Universiteit Leiden, 2000). For work on codices see Maarten E.R.G.N. (Maarten Evert Reinoud Gerard Nicolaas) Jansen, *The Mixtec Pictorial Manuscripts: Time, Agency, and Memory in Ancient Mexico* / by Maarten E.R.G.N. Jansen, Gabina Aurora Pérez Jiménez. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011); Maarten E.R.G.N Jansen and Gabina Aurora Pérez Jiménez, *Encounter with the Plumed Serpent: Drama and Power in the Heart of Mesoamerica* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2007); Maarten E.R.G.N. Jansen, Michel R Oudijk, and Peter Kröfges, *The Shadow of Monte Albán: Politics and Historiography in Postclassic Oaxaca, Mexico* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Research School CNWS, School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies, 1998); Sebastián van Doesburg, *Pictografía y escritura alfabética en Oaxaca* (Oaxaca, México: Instituto Estatal de Educación Pública de Oaxaca, 2008); John M.D. Pohl, *The Politics of Symbolism in the Mixtec Codices*, Vanderbilt University Publications in Anthropology, no. 46 (Nashville, Tenn: Vanderbilt University, 1994).

¹² Recent scholarship on the history of the Central Valleys in the colonial period include, William B Taylor, *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1972); William B Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide & Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1979); William B Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred: Priests and Parishioners in Eighteenth-Century Mexico* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1996); John K Chance, *Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1978); John K. Chance and William B. Taylor, "Cofradías and Cargos: An Historical Perspective on the Mesoamerican Civil-Religious Hierarchy," *American Ethnologist* 12, no. 1 (February 1, 1985): 1–26; Jeremy Baskes, *Indians, Merchants, and Markets: A Reinterpretation of the Repartimiento and Spanish-Indian Economic Relations in Colonial Oaxaca, 1750-1821* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2000); Ma. de los Angeles Romero Frizzi, *El Sol y La Cruz: Los Pueblos Indios De Oaxaca Colonial*, 1. ed, Historia de Los Pueblos Indígenas de México (Tlalpan, Mexico: CIESAS; INI, 1996); Ma. de los Angeles Romero Frizzi, *Escritura zapoteca: 2,500 años de historia* (México: CIESAS; Porrúa: CONACULTA, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2003); "In a Land with Two Laws: Spanish and Indigenous Justice in Eighteenth Century Oaxaca, Mexico." 2005; Manuel Esparza and Laura R Waterbury, *The Founding of the City of Oaxaca (1529-1531): A History of Sex, Greed, Torture and Death* (Oaxaca: INAH-Oaxaca: Carteles Editores, 2005); Joseph W Whitecotton, *Zapotec Elite Ethnohistory: Pictorial Genealogies from Eastern Oaxaca* (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University, 1990).

¹³ For groundbreaking historical studies on Mesoamerica, see: James Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest: a Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1992); Kevin Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca: Ñudzahui History, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001); William F. Hanks, *Converting Words: Maya in the Age of the Cross*, The Anthropology of Christianity, no. 6 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); *Mesoamerican Voices: Native-Language Writings from Colonial Mexico, Oaxaca, Yucatan, and Guatemala* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

produced from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries represents one of the first attempts in the field of ethnohistory to re-examine the history of this rich region of Mesoamerica.¹⁴ My participation in the UCLA “Zapotexts” group has given me access to these rare documents. Since 1999, Kevin Terraciano and Pamela Munro have organized a project to locate, transcribe, translate, and analyze Zapotec-language texts written in the Roman alphabet during the colonial period. The group began by analyzing documents found by Lisa Sousa in the Archivo General del Estado de Oaxaca. Members of the group located and copied many more documents in subsequent research trips to archives in Oaxaca and Mexico City. I have participated in the group since 1999, working together with several historians and linguists in the transcription and translation of the texts. I have honored the conventions that we agreed upon as a collective, including the way to cite the Córdova dictionary, respecting the 16th century Spanish spelling found in the sources and the reference style for our analyzed documents.¹⁵ My translation of excerpts of texts in this dissertation is based on our group's collective work.¹⁶

I also use a variety of Spanish-language legal records that were generated in the Central Valley of Oaxaca for many types of historical information. Many of the Zapotec-language documents, in fact, are attached to Spanish-language cases in local or national archives. Many of

¹⁴ Among the most relevant contributions to the study of Zapotec language are the following, John Olen Foreman, “The Morphosyntax of Subject in Macuilianguis Zapotec” (PhD Thesis, UCLA, 2006), Felicia Lee, “Antisymmetry and the Syntax of San Lucas Quiavini Zapotec” (PhD Thesis, UCLA, 1999), Brook Danielle Lillehaugen, “Expressing Location in Tlacolula Valley Zapotec” (PhD Thesis, UCLA 2006), Aaron Huey Sonnenschein, “A Descriptive Grammar of San Bartolomé Zoogocho Zapotec” (PhD Thesis, USC, 2004). Galant, Michael Rene. *Comparative Constructions in Spanish and San Lucas Quiavini Zapotec*. (München: Lincom Europa, 2006). The very first dictionary in English-Spanish and Zapotec written for modern Zapotec is for the variant spoken in the community of San Lucas Quiavini in the Oaxacan Central Valleys see, Pamela Munro and Felipe H Lopez, *Di'csyonaary X:tèe'n Dii'zh Sah Sann Lu'uc = San Lucas Quiavini Zapotec Dictionary* (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Publications, 1999).

¹⁵ For example, when citing references from Córdova's Vocabulario, I use: “C” followed by the page number and recto or verso which I mark with “r” or “v” respectively.

¹⁶ See the Acknowledgements section for a list of the members of the UCLA “Zapotexts” group.

the Zapotec-language records contained in these legal cases were translated into Spanish by bilingual interpreters, who were employed by the Spanish courts when the documents were submitted as evidence in the legal case. Although the translations are not always entirely accurate, they serve as useful guides for our analysis of the native-language texts.

One of my principal goals is to identify and describe fundamental Zapotec concepts and practices in this period, and to consider how they changed or did not change over time. This dissertation examines how the abundant documentary record sheds light on one particular fundamental Zapotec practice that has not received much attention in previous studies: a sharing system known as *guelaguetza*. The Zapotec term refers to an ancient system of collaboration and exchange used for distributing resources such as money, agricultural products and labor. Some Spanish-language documents refer to this tradition indirectly as a *uso y costumbre* (custom and practice), as one Zapotec witness called it in a legal case from 1576. A few Zapotec-language documents refer to it more explicitly, using the term "guelaguetza," such as two last wills and testaments from Teitipac, written in the years 1614 and 1626, and another text from the community of Tlacoahuaya, written in 1675.¹⁷

The Zapotec *guelaguetza* system is composed of three separate types of collaboration: public labor, called *tequio* (after the Nahuatl *tequitl*, "work"); public offices, called *cargos* ("charges" in Spanish); and gift deposits made during feasts, which are called "guelaguetza" in Zapotec. People of the Oaxacan Central Valley practiced this tripartite system of labor, service and gifts from pre-Columbian times through the colonial period and to the present day. The system enabled Zapotec communities to survive major historical transformations and to maintain

¹⁷ For attestations of the word "guelaguetza" in Zapotec-language documentation, see AGEO Alcaldías Mayores (Tlacoahuaya) 1675, 19: 31 and for Teitipac 1614 see AGN T 256: 2 f. 104-104v as well as Zapotexts Te626 for Teitipac 1626.

control of local properties and resources. During the colonial period, the guelaguetza system allowed Zapotecs to meet tribute demands and to safeguard their lands from Spanish settlers, despite severe population loss due to diseases introduced by the Europeans, and colonial pressures that affected all Mesoamerican societies.

Zapotecs adapted the guelaguetza system to the money economy introduced by Spaniards. Like all other Mesoamerican societies, Zapotecs were threatened with impoverization, as the population declined by about 90% over the course of a century, while Spaniards forced indigenous societies to pay tribute and to provide uncompensated labor through the *encomienda*, *repartimiento* and tribute systems. The internal guelaguetza system did not rely on money, and thus functioned independently of the external money economy. But Zapotecs used the guelaguetza system to meet and mitigate the impact of these demands on indigenous households and communities.

Guelaguetza allowed and in some cases prompted Zapotecs of the Central Valley communities to participate in a collective endeavor that was embraced and understood by everyone involved. The system functioned independently of the larger colonial economy and, in some ways, operated parallel to it; as far as we can tell, guelaguetza exchanges occurred only between indigenous people within their communities, and sometimes among people who lived in different, distant communities. The system was so enduring that many communities continue to practice forms of guelaguetza in the twenty-first century, in altered but entirely recognizable forms. The practice continues to be known as "guelaguetza," as it was centuries ago.

Spanish Entrance into the Central Valley of Oaxaca

Oaxaca's colonial history began without the violent wars that occurred in the Basin of Mexico. After defeating Mexica-Tenochca armies in central Mexico, combined Spanish and native forces under the command of Francisco de Orozco set out to "pacify" Oaxaca's populous Central Valley in 1521. The former Mexica tribute-collecting garrison at Huaxyacac, which was settled by Spaniards and other Nahua groups from central Mexico, was renamed Antequera (today the city is known as Oaxaca de Juárez). The Mexica-led empire had colonized many communities in the region only a few decades before the Spaniards arrived, under the reign of Ahuitzotl (1486-1502) and his successor, Moteuczoma Xocoyotzin. The King of Spain granted Hernando Cortés the title of "Marques del Valle de Oaxaca," which entitled him to a *marquesado* or estate that included a good part of the surrounding territory.¹⁸ Cortés profited from tribute and labor paid by the indigenous inhabitants of the region, but also became entangled in numerous lawsuits over land and labor that continued after his death and well into the colonial period.

When the Spaniards arrived in Oaxaca, there were at least thirty separate Zapotec communities in the Central valley, approximately one-fifth of the tribute-paying indigenous population of Oaxaca in the colonial period.¹⁹ The number of Spaniards in this period paled in comparison to the size of the indigenous population, despite its catastrophic decline in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The lack of a powerful Spanish presence in the Valley of

¹⁸ Peter Gerhard, *A Guide to the Historical Geography of New Spain*, Cambridge Latin American Studies 14 (Cambridge [Eng.]: University Press, 1972). The documents pertaining to Cortés' large estate throughout the colonial period are housed in the *Hospital de Jesús* section of the Archivo General de la Nación.

¹⁹ Ibid., 17, 31

Oaxaca, relative to that in the Basin of Mexico, was apparent all the way to the end of the eighteenth century, as William Taylor has shown in his famous study of Oaxaca.²⁰

The documentation used in this dissertation refers to thirteen *queche* (Central Valley Zapotec for *pueblo* or "community") in a region of approximately thirty miles in circumference, including: San Baltazar Chichicápam, San Bartolomé Coyotepec, San Juan Guelavía, San Pablo Güilá, San Mateo Macuilxóchitl, Tlacolula de Matamoros, San Jerónimo Tlacoahuaya, San Juan Teitipac, San Lucas Quiaviní, San Bartolomé Quialana, Santa Ana del Valle, Teotitlán del Valle and San Pablo Villa de Mitla. Some of these places were given as *encomiendas* (royal grants of the right to collect labor and tribute from a given community) to Spaniards who helped to subdue the region, or were assigned directly to the crown. In 1552, the *alcalde mayor* (chief Spanish first-instance judge and administrator in a given territory) of the Valley of Oaxaca (often written "Guaxaca" in this period) had direct control over seventeen *corregimientos* (towns within the *alcalde mayor*'s jurisdiction). To these were added another sixteen communities inside and outside the Valley, including some very distant *pueblos* on the coast and in the highlands (*sierra*).²¹ Thus, the *alcalde mayor* and his small staff represented the Spanish political and judicial presence in these thirty-three far-flung *queche*. Indigenous forms of administration and organization continued to operate in the relative absence of a strong Spanish presence. In some communities, the *alcalde mayor* was only obligated to make a single visit during his five-year term of office.

Compared to *altepeme* (plural of *altepetl*) around Mexico City, indigenous communities surrounding Antequera did not experience the same type of sustained and intensive contact with

²⁰ See William B Taylor, *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1972).

²¹ *Ibid.*, 49-50.

Spaniards in the colonial period. In the absence of large silver deposits to attract Spanish settlers, powerful colonial institutions did not develop in the same way as they did in other densely populated regions of New Spain. One colonial institution that did thrive, in the relative absence of competition from secular Spaniards, was the Church. The Dominican order, in particular, claimed most of Oaxaca's territory as the center of their conversion efforts.²² Most of the magnificent churches built by indigenous people under the orders of the Dominican friars still stand to this day.

At the same time, Oaxaca was no colonial backwater. Oaxaca was a strategic trading post on the royal road from Mexico City to Quauhtemallan (Guatemala) in the south, from pre-conquest times and throughout the colonial period. Fray Francisco de Burgoa, a Dominican chronicler of the seventeenth century, proclaimed that the lands surrounding Antequera were among the most fertile, populated, and thriving areas to be found in all of New Spain.²³ In addition, diverse ethnic groups in the Valley of Oaxaca had engaged in centuries of commerce and exchange with other groups in all four directions. A thousand years prior to 1521, during the Classic period, the great sites of Teotihuacan and Monte Albán flourished at the same time, benefiting from mutual influences and exchanges. From the Preclassic through the Postclassic periods, Zapotec populations moved from larger urban centers to numerous small dynastic kingdoms, places such as Dainzú (circa 700 BCE), Lambityeco (circa 700 BCE), Yagúl (circa 700 BCE), Mitla (circa 750-1521 CE), Teitipac (circa 750-1521 CE) and Teotitlán (circa 750-

²² See the contribution by John K. Chance in, Ronald Spores and Patricia A Andrews, *Ethnohistory*, 1st edition, Supplement to the Handbook of Middle American Indians, v. 4 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 173.

²³ Francisco de Burgoa, *Geográfica descripción de la parte septentrional del Polo Artico de la América y nueva iglesia de las Indias Occidentales y sitio astronómico de esta Provincia de Predicadores de Antequera, Valle de Oaxaca* (México: Editorial Porrúa, 1989), 203.

1521 CE).²⁴ Over the course of centuries, settlement patterns alternated between periods of consolidation and fragmentation. When the Spaniards arrived, multiple sites with dispersed populations were the rule; the Mexica of Tenochtitlan were exceptional in that they had only begun to consolidate their influence in central Mexico.

Colonial officials used long-existing, indigenous socio-political structures in their attempt to manage these dispersed communities. The hierarchy was designed so that the most basic level of this system, the Nahuatl *altepetl*, the Mixtec *ñuu*, the Zapotec *queche*, or the Maya *cah* could respond to the demands of the Spanish crown. Simultaneously, indigenous responses to the new demands of the Spaniards involved a complex system of cooperation and negotiation. As the two pillars of the local governmental hierarchy, indigenous *cabildos* (Spanish-style municipal councils) and *cofradías* (*lay confraternities*) kept records of their official business. After learning how to write Zapotec with the roman alphabet from Dominican friars, evidence suggests that Zapotecs taught each other how to read and write texts and documents that were designed for local, internal audiences.²⁵

The activities of Zapotec leaders, as recorded in the books that *cabildos* and *cofradías* kept and preserved, allow us to trace the evolution of cultural and corporate practices, such as *guelaguetza*, that empowered indigenous societies of New Spain, despite drastic demographic decline and multiple colonial demands. I use these texts to address numerous questions: How was *guelaguetza* manifested in the colonial period? What was its role in local society? How did local traditions in Oaxaca continue in the colonial period? Who were the leaders or bearers of

²⁴ John M. D Pohl, *Exploring Mesoamerica* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 191.

²⁵ Perhaps the best example of documents written for an internal (non-Spanish) audience are the Zapotec calendars produced in the Northern Sierra region and studied by David Eduardo Tavárez, *The Invisible War: Indigenous Devotions, Discipline, and Dissent in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2011).

these traditions and what roles did they play in local Oaxacan society? How did the native nobility in this region respond to colonial institutions? To what extent can we measure the maintenance, transformation or adaptation of Zapotec culture? Whereas the Nahuas of central Mexico came into direct contact with Spaniards and colonial institutions, the Zapotecs were comparable more to the Mixtecs of northwestern Oaxaca and the Maya of Yucatan, where many indigenous traditions and institutions persisted until the end of the 18th century.²⁶ My study focuses on the Central Valley queche located within the sphere of influence of the colonial city of Antequera, in the heart of the Central Valley.

Oaxacan Indigenous Historiography

In the late nineteenth century, during the Porfiriato, a priest named Jose Antonio Gay attempted to reconstruct Oaxaca's past by glorifying the work of the conquistadors who pacified the "indios" and brought them into the light of civilization.²⁷ Although he took much information from the Dominican chronicler, Francisco de Burgoa, Gay's *Historia de Oaxaca* turned out to be an important contribution to the literature for his ethnographic observations of indigenous people of his time. Gay followed the tradition of chroniclers such as Burgoa and Dávila Padilla by providing accounts of the cultural and linguistic traits of the people in

²⁶ Chance and Taylor's work also discusses the slow transformation of Indigenous socio-cultural and religious norms, especially when compared to other prominent centers of Spanish-Native exchange. See William B Taylor, *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1972). And Robert Stephen Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers: An Ethnohistory of Town Government in Colonial Cuernavaca* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991). Also, Kevin Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca: Nudzahui History, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001).

²⁷ José Antonio Gay, *Historia de Oaxaca*, (Mexico: Imprenta del Comercio, de Dublan y ca, 1881).

Oaxaca's eight regions.²⁸ Rather than demeaning these peoples, Gay chose to highlight the richness of the state where Porfirio Díaz and Benito Juárez were born, generalizing about the most notable traits to be found among various indigenous groups, such as the Mixe, whose language he compared to German.²⁹ Gay's work did not go beyond an outsiders' description, nor did it provide any significant "new" information regarding the indigenous past, but it did confirm the fact that indigenous cultures of Oaxaca continued to fascinate historians as subjects of study.

During the first half of the twentieth century, a group of intellectuals known as *Indigenistas* glorified the ancient indigenous past, while attempting to extol the indigenous present; this current of thought tended to ignore the colonial past and to look forward to the promise of the future. This politicized version of indigenous culture preferred myths and legends about the ancient past over histories of the postconquest period.³⁰ Scholars and collectors filled museums with pre-Columbian artifacts from sites such as Monte Albán, Dainzú, Yagul or Lambityeco.³¹ But there was little interest in the history of the viceregal period and there were few resources for anyone to study this history, especially at the local level.³² Instead, historians

²⁸ Agustín Dávila Padilla, *Historia de la fundación y discurso de la provincia de Santiago de México, de la Orden de Predicadores*. (México: Editorial Academia Literaria, 1955); Francisco de Burgoa, *Geográfica descripción de la parte septentrional del Polo Artico de la América y nueva iglesia de las Indias Occidentales y sitio astronómico de esta Provincia de Predicadores de Antequera, Valle de Oaxaca* (México: Editorial Porrúa, 1989).

²⁹ Gay, *Historia de Oaxaca*, 15.

³⁰ For example see, Andrés Henestrosa, *Los hombres que dispersó la danza* (La Habana: Casa de las Américas, 1980); Andrés Henestrosa, *Retrato de mi madre* (México: Bibliófilos Oaxaqueños, 1967). Manuel Gamio, *Forjando patria*. (México: Editorial Porrúa, 1960). José Vasconcelos, *La raza cosmica: mision de la raza Iberoamericana, Argentina y Brasil* (Mexico: Espasa-Calpe, 1966).

³¹ Several sites in the Central Valley of Oaxaca remain un-excavated such as in San Bartolomé Quialana or San Lucas Quiavini for example.

³² In the Central Valley, in Tlacoahuaya, Teotitlán, and Tlacolula, for example, elderly Zapotec men who once served cargos in their municipios tell stories about local mestizo political bosses using any "old papers" for

focused primarily on the heroes of Mexican Independence and the Mexican Revolution, who were seen as symbols of “progress.” Many Mexican elites considered the indigenous historical past unworthy of scholarly attention. Even José Vasconcelos, an accomplished scholar from Oaxaca, believed that “indios” should forget their “backward” ways in order to enter the national discourse on education and progress.³³ While the government and elites tried to “civilize” “indios”, scholars such as Manuel Gamio and Alfonso Caso traversed the Oaxacan highlands, uncovering treasures in the royal tombs of Mitla and Monte Albán.³⁴ However, they could not reconcile this glorious and rich past with the stark reality of an impoverished indigenous population, whose state of affairs they bemoaned. Gamio’s solution for the “indian problem” in his essay called “Forjando Patria” shared Vasconcelos’ vision: to disregard the colonial past and to fortify the nation by encouraging “indios” to become mestizos.³⁵ In this culture of ideas, Oaxaca’s colonial history was practically ignored by academics in Mexico and the United States until new approaches to studying colonial Mexican history prompted scholars from new fields of study.³⁶

their fiesta fireworks. Personal communication with elders in Mitla (2000), Teotitlán (2003 then again in 2011), Tlacolula (continuous since 2000) and Tlacoahuaya (2004).

³³ See the speech, for example, that Vasconcelos made when he became rector of the National University. José Vasconcelos, *Obras completas I I* (México: Libr. Mexicanos Unidos, 1957).

³⁴ Alfonso Caso and Manuel Gamio independently contributed several articles and texts based on their extensive work in Oaxaca. Among scores of studies see for example, Alfonso Caso, *Las exploraciones en Monte Albán temporada 1934-1935 ...* (Tacubaya, D.F., México, 1935); Caso and Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (Mexico), *Urnas De Oaxaca*; Alfonso Caso, *Lapidaria Y Orfebrería En Oaxaca*, 1. ed, Valores de Oaxaca (Oaxaca: Casa de la Cultura Oaxaqueña: Dirección de Comunicación Social del Gobierno del Estado, 1990); Alfonso Caso, *Reyes y reinos de la mixteca / Alfonso Caso.*, 1. ed. (México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1977).

³⁵ Manuel Gamio, *Forjando patria*. (México: Editorial Porrúa, 1960).

³⁶ James Lockhart, “The Social History of Colonial Spanish America: Evolution and Potential,” *Latin American Research Review* 7, no. 1 (1972).

In the middle of the twentieth century, after some years of relative peace following the Mexican Revolution, scholars entered Oaxaca looking for historical sources.³⁷ As Latin American historiography moved toward social histories in the late 1960s, scholarly work on the Central Valleys of Oaxaca remained in the hands of anthropologists and ethnographers.³⁸ William Taylor's landmark study of the early 1970s, *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca*, is the first major history of Oaxaca's colonial period.³⁹ Significantly, Taylor found that indigenous communities and caciques were among the largest landholders by the end of the colonial period. Spanish *haciendas* did not dominate the land tenure regime in Oaxaca.⁴⁰ Taylor tested a general thesis proposed by the works of Francois Chevalier and Charles Gibson, his mentor, who found that haciendas in the north and center of Mexico expanded over time at the expense of indigenous landholdings.⁴¹ Taylor demonstrated how the study of land records can offer valuable insights into the rate of transformation within agrarian societies. Taylor also found that powerful indigenous caciques adopted Antequera as their new home and attempted to manage their territorial possessions from a distance, but often opted to sell or bequeath their land to family or respected members of their communities.⁴² Throughout the colonial period, then,

³⁷ See for example, Woodrow Wilson Borah, *Notes on Civil Archives in the City of Oaxaca* (n.p.;1951)

³⁸ Along with U.S. Historians, Anglophone ethnographers and anthropologists came looking to Oaxaca as the center of their scholarly studies. See for example, Elsie Worthington Clews Parsons, *Mitla, Town of the Souls: And Other Zapoteco-Speaking Pueblos of Oaxaca, Mexico* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1936); Helen Augur, *Zapotec*. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1954); Charles M Leslie, *Now We Are Civilized: A Study of the World View of the Zapotec Indians of Mitla, Oaxaca* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1960).

³⁹ Taylor, *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca*.

⁴⁰ One important question, that Taylor left open for future discussion is: How were indigenous communities able to maintain control of their property? I address this question in my work.

⁴¹ See François Chevalier, *Land and Society in Colonial Mexico; the Great Hacienda*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963); Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs under Spanish Rule; a History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810*. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1964); Charles Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*. (Oxford, England; Oxford University Press, 1952).

⁴² This is what the Zapotexts group has found in the indigenous language records analyzed thus far.

“native peasants and communities were important landholders” of fertile agricultural lands in the Central Valley, along with the church.⁴³ This dissertation addresses the question of how the Central Valley Zapotec were able to maintain control of much of their property, and what happened when Zapotec lords moved away from their communities.

Taylor highlights the active role that members of the native nobility played in the Central Valley communities, people who stand out in the record as *gobernadores*, *regidores*, *alguaciles*, *escribanos* and *topiles* on indigenous *cabildos*. The cabildos were Spanish-style councils that governed local communities. In general, it was this group of men who oversaw the production of Zapotec- and Spanish-language documents within indigenous communities. Overall, Zapotecs controlled and guarded indigenous landholdings in the Oaxacan Central Valleys, leaving city government and commercial enterprises in specialized commodities to Europeans, *mestizos*, people of African descent, and in the later colonial period, to descendants of the indigenous nobility who chose to reside in the city.⁴⁴ My dissertation shows that lower-ranking nobles, people who were often called *principales*, remained active in many communities throughout the colonial period.⁴⁵ While many Zapotecs recognized the importance of the city, local communities were the essential containers of indigenous culture, reminiscent of spaces that Aguirre Beltrán calls “Regiones de Refugio”.⁴⁶ Ultimately, in addition to guarding local interests, Zapotec ethnic autonomy preserved important cultural practices, such as *guelaguetza*.

⁴³ Taylor, *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca*, 107.

⁴⁴ Haskett found a similar situation in the Cuernavaca area, where local political power was guarded within certain indigenous noble families, a tradition that continued up to the 18th century. See Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers*.

⁴⁵ Based on Zapotexts work.

⁴⁶ Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, *Regiones de Refugio: El Desarrollo de La Comunidad y El Proceso Dominical En Mestizo América* (México, D.F.: Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 1973).

Certainly, the Zapotec adoption of alphabetic writing and active engagement with the court system proved beneficial to native communities.⁴⁷ As Taylor noted, “the Indians’ frequent recourse to litigation, often at great expense, is one of the most striking aspects of their adjustment to colonial rule.”⁴⁸ As in other regions of Mesoamerica, this tradition is considered to have been an extension of pre-conquest practices that valued the spoken and written word.⁴⁹ The so-called “codices” and other pictographic and written forms of documents, which were so esteemed in pre-conquest times, were transformed in response to new boundaries that were set by the colonial legal system and agenda. Native writers adapted quickly to the new system, which required them to write documents and present evidence in support of their legal claims.⁵⁰ According to Michel Oudijk, Mexican archives contain enough Zapotec-language manuscripts to fill a lifetime of research; this prospect confirms Taylor’s observation that indigenous people understood “the importance of formal wills [which] left very little Indian property intestate despite great population losses.”⁵¹ This abundant archival record reveals many aspects of Zapotec life. As Robert Haskett observed, these documents were “written with great sensitivity

⁴⁷ John K Chance, *Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1978). Chance says, “The virtual mountains of petitions, complaints, and lawsuits initiated by the Indians of Oaxaca in colonial times make it clear that they were not a passive element in the society. This was largely thanks to the strength of the Oaxaca caciques under Spanish rule, and to their success in retaining considerable chunks of their lands”, 28.

⁴⁸ Taylor, *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca*, 53.

⁴⁹ See Matthew Restall, “Heirs to the Hieroglyphs: Indigenous Writing in Colonial Mesoamerica,” *The Americas* 54, no. 2 (1997).

⁵⁰ It is also important to recognize that writing down simply reinforced the importance of oral agreements in native society.

⁵¹ Personal communication with Michel Oudijk in 2010. Taylor, *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca*, 108.

to the colonial legal system, they were not a completely colonial innovation, in a very real sense being firmly rooted in pre-Hispanic tradition.”⁵²

John Chance’s *Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca* provides a valuable profile of Antequera’s population in the colonial period, viewed from the perspectives of ethnicity and socio-economic status.⁵³ Chance’s study offers evidence of the benefits that attracted native migrants from the Valley to the city, people whom Chance calls “urban indians.” It is important to note, however, that most “urban Indians” did not simply adopt the city of Antequera in place of their home communities, especially when these communities were so close to the city. Chance showed that this demographic of native people, served important roles as intermediaries between their communities and the Spanish city. Natives learned to use their privileges as nobles, elites or Spanish speakers to win favor of colonial administration. Many indigenous people who lived in the city served important roles in the colonial administration and economy *because* they were versed in both worlds, the urban space dominated by the Spanish and rural communities where most native people lived. Moreover, Chance’s archival research showed that Oaxaca was an interesting and unique area for historical investigation.

Because there are several Zapotec regions of Oaxaca (Sierra Norte, Sierra Sur, Coast, Isthmus, and Central Valley), one might expect a great deal of scholarship on the Zapotecs of Colonial Oaxaca. There are several excellent works, but not as many as one would expect. For the Sierra Norte, a few important contributions have been made, most recently by Yanna

⁵² Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers*, 80.

⁵³ John K Chance, *Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca*.

Yannakakis and David Tavárez, who have followed the pioneering work of John Chance.⁵⁴ Tavárez's work sheds light on the clandestine religious practices of Zapotecs who were often members of *cofradías* or participants in the church-sponsored activities of their pueblos. He uses Spanish- and Zapotec-language sources to highlight indigenous responses to the conversion efforts of the Dominican friars. Tavárez shows that the indigenous leaders of Sierra Norte communities maintained their local non-Christian religious beliefs and practices while pretending to engage in pious Christian activities. Yannakakis uses Spanish-language sources to show the dynamic and diverse roles played by native intermediaries--people who by choice or chance were propelled into exchanges between colonial institutions and local communities--in the colonial process. Yannakakis also demonstrates how demands associated with the Bourbon reforms affected the choices of indigenous intermediaries.

An important body of work on the Zapotec has been published in Mexico in recent years. Maria de los Angeles Romero-Frizzi's studies of indigenous interactions with Spaniards in the late colonial period include evidence of exchanges between Mixtec and Zapotec people under colonial rule.⁵⁵ Romero-Frizzi's edited volume dedicated to Zapotec writing traditions offers an excellent source for understanding the colonial indigenous awareness of history and record

⁵⁴ John K Chance, *Conquest of the Sierra: Spaniards and Indians in Colonial Oaxaca* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989). For the most recent work on the Sierra Zapotecs see Yanna Yannakakis, *The Art of Being in-Between: Native Intermediaries, Indian Identity, and Local Rule in Colonial Oaxaca* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008). And for the Sierra Norte of Oaxaca see David Eduardo Tavárez, *The Invisible War: Indigenous Devotions, Discipline, and Dissent in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2011).

⁵⁵ Ma. de los Angeles Romero Frizzi, *El Sol Y La Cruz: Los Pueblos Indios De Oaxaca Colonial*, 1. ed, *Historia de Los Pueblos Indígenas de México* (Mexico, D.F.: CIESAS-INI, 1996); Romero Frizzi, *Escritura zapoteca*; Ma. de los Angeles Romero Frizzi and Juana Vásquez Vásquez, "Un título primordial de San Francisco Yatee, Oaxaca.," *Tlalocan* 17 (2011): 85–120.

keeping.⁵⁶ Moreover, Beatriz López Cruz, a student of Romero-Frizzi, published an excellent study of Zapotec conflicts over lands and community boundaries in the Central Valley.⁵⁷ López's work is the most recent ethnohistorical study dedicated to the Tlacolula region. Sebastián van Doesburg has written extensively on many Oaxacan regions, including some relevant to the Central Valleys. His studies of various *lienzos* (histories painted on large cloths) and his edited volume on writing in Oaxaca offer important new insights into indigenous writing and history both before and after the conquest.⁵⁸ Likewise, Michel Oudijk has made many contributions to the literature on Zapotec history, both in English and in Spanish.⁵⁹ Oudijk co-authored another article with Romero-Frizzi that examines a Zapotec version of a Mesoamerican writing genre called *títulos primordiales*.⁶⁰ Finally, Maira Córdova AGüilár has published an important study that considers the African diaspora and the population's diverse manifestations under colonialism in the colonial center of Antequera.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Ma. de los Angeles Romero Frizzi, *Escritura zapoteca: 2,500 años de historia* (México: CIESAS : Porrúa : CONACULTA, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2003).

⁵⁷ Beatriz Cruz López, *Pueblos en movimiento: conflicto y poder en el valle de Tlacolula, Oaxaca, durante la época colonial* (Zamora, Michoacán: El Colegio de Michoacán, 2012).

⁵⁸ Sebastián van Doesburg, *Pictografía y escritura alfabética en Oaxaca* (Oaxaca, México: Instituto Estatal de Educación Pública de Oaxaca, 2008); Sebastián van Doesburg, "De linderos y lugares: territorio y asentamiento en el lienzo de Santa Maria Nativitas," *Relaciones: Estudios de Historia y Sociedad (Zamora)* 22, no. 86 (2001): 15–82.

⁵⁹ Michel R Oudijk, *Historiography of the Bènzàa*, (Universiteit Leiden, CNWS Publications, 2000); Michel R Oudijk et al., *Los lienzos pictográficos de Santa Cruz Papalutla Oaxaca* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México: Fundación Alfredo Harp Helú, 2010); Michel R Oudijk. "Una Nueva Historia Zapoteca" in *Secretos del Mundo Zapoteca* edited by Eva E. Ramírez Gasga, 267-321. (Tehuantepec e Ixtepec, Oaxaca: Universidad del Istmo, 2008).

⁶⁰ Michel R Oudijk and Maria de los Angeles Romero Frizzi, "Los títulos primordiales: un genero de tradicion mesoamericana. Del mundo prehispánico al siglo XXI.," *Relaciones: Estudios de Historia y Sociedad (Zamora)* 24, no. 095 (2003): 19–48.

⁶¹ Maira Cristina Córdova AGüilár, *Población de origen africano en Oaxaca colonial (1680-1700)* (Oaxaca, Oax. Mexico: Secretaría de las Culturas y Artes de Oaxaca, 2012).

Work on the Zapotec of the Isthmus tends to focus on the modern period, in part due to the strong Indigenista movement within this region of Oaxaca. However, one relevant and valuable contribution to the historiography of a colonial Zapotec group is Judith Zeitlin's book on Tehuantepec, in which she examines the transformation of Isthmus Zapotecs throughout the first half of the colonial period.⁶² The most relevant aspects of this analysis for my own work concern Zeitlin's analysis of a struggle for power that was waged by the last Zapotec ruler, Juan Cortés. The indigenous leader was charged with idolatry and lost all of his royal privileges, but his descendants sued to recover his estate. In addition, Zeitlin's documentation of multi-ethnic alliances between Huave and Zapotec groups poses an interesting alternative to the notion that Mesoamerican groups were unable to unify during this period.

In addition to histories of the Zapotec of Oaxaca, another body of literature that informs my project is the recent ethnohistorical work of James Lockhart and his students, known as the UCLA School of New Philology. This school has produced numerous, fascinating histories based on the study of indigenous language sources from colonial Mesoamerica, with especial attention to the Nahuatl of central Mexico.⁶³ Proceeding from the detailed archival work of Charles Gibson on Tlaxcala and the Valley of Mexico, Lockhart demonstrated that indigenous forms of community organization and local indigenous politics did not melt away with the collapse of the Mexica empire.⁶⁴ Research on the Nahuatl of central Mexico has re-defined the history of Nahuatl structures of government and local society, previously obscured by Spanish-

⁶² Judith Francis Zeitlin, *Cultural Politics in Colonial Tehuantepec: Community and State among the Isthmus Zapotec, 1500-1750* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005).

⁶³ The term was coined by James Lockhart. See Matthew Restall, "A History of the New Philology and the New Philology in History," *Latin American Research Review* 38, no. 1 (2003).

⁶⁴ Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century.*; Gibson, *The Aztecs under Spanish Rule; a History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810.*

language documents. We now know that the *altepetl*, called a *pueblo* by Spaniards, was the basic unit of settlement, composed of multiple *calpolli* or *tlaxilacalli*.⁶⁵ Similarly, I show in my work that the Zapotec queche consisted of several subunits or *barrios*.⁶⁶ The contributions of this new historiography have forced the field to reassess complex processes of change and continuity in this period.

Systematic studies of native-language sources from other parts of Mesoamerica provide equally informative and new vistas on other Mesoamerican societies under colonial rule. The most influential study for my research is Terraciano's *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*--the other major culture group in colonial Oaxaca (as in modern times).⁶⁷ Terraciano's analysis of Mixtec or *ñudzahui*-language records provides insightful perspectives on the adaptation and transformation of indigenous life over the better part of three centuries, while offering

⁶⁵ For historiography produced by the School of New Philology see, James Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest : A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992).p. 16. For other examples of the "New Philology" involving the translation and analysis of Nahuatl-language sources, see Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers : An Ethnohistory of Town Government in Colonial Cuernavaca*. Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest : A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries*. S. L. Cline, *Colonial Culhuacan, 1580-1600 : A Social History of an Aztec Town*, 1st ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986). Rebecca Horn, *Postconquest Coyoacan : Nahua-Spanish Relations in Central Mexico, 1519-1650* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997). Mexican Scholars have also produced important work such as Miguel León Portilla, *Cantos Y Crónicas Del México Antiguo*, 1a ed., *Crónicas De América* 24 (Madrid: Historia 16, 1986). And Miguel León Portilla, Edna Acosta-Belén, and José Jorge Klor de Alva, *De Palabra Y Obra En El Nuevo Mundo*, 1. ed., *Antropología Y Etnología* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1992). Also Miguel León Portilla, *Fifteen Poets of the Aztec World*, 1st ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), Miguel León Portilla and Earl Shorris, *In the Language of Kings : An Anthology of Mesoamerican Literature--Pre-Columbian to the Present* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001). In addition, scholarship in english has included work by Barry D. Sell, Louise M. Burkhart, and Gregory Spira, *Nahuatl Theater* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004). And Louise M. Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth : Nahua-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989). Also see Susan Kellogg and Matthew Restall, *Dead Giveaways : Indigenous Testaments of Colonial Mesoamerica and the Andes* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1998), Peter Herman Sigal, *From Moon Goddesses to Virgins : The Colonization of Yucatecan Maya Sexual Desire*, 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000). For the Mixtec see, Kevin Terraciano, "The Colonial Mixtec Community," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 80, no. 1 (2000).

⁶⁶ [C]órdova52r: "Barrio de villa o lugar. Tòbi làoquèche, tobi quiña queche, chacuè quèchè."

⁶⁷ Kevin Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca: Ñudzahui History, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001).

considerable evidence for deep-seated continuities in the Mixteca. The proximity of the Zapoteca to the Mixteca, which actually extends into the Valley of Oaxaca, and the periodization of Terraciano's study, allows numerous comparisons.

There are several other important contributions to the historiography of the indigenous peoples of the Mixtec region of Oaxaca. Rodolfo Pastor examined social and economic transformations in the Mixteca Alta during the second half of the colonial period.⁶⁸ María de los Angeles Romero Frizzi wrote an outstanding book on society and trade in the Mixteca Alta, focusing on both indigenous and non-indigenous populations in the region.⁶⁹ Woodrow Borah's studies of silk production and the indigenous population in the Mixteca Alta is a classic.⁷⁰ And Ronald Spores has written several interdisciplinary studies of the Mixteca Alta that focus on both the preconquest and postconquest periods.⁷¹

Chapter Overview

This dissertation describes the inner workings of the Zapotec *queche* and takes into consideration the multi-dimensional aspects of *guelaguetza*, an indigenous form of social cohesion based on the reciprocal exchange of gifts among households, labor for public works,

⁶⁸ Rodolfo Pastor, *Campesinos y reformas: la mixteca, 1700-1856*, (México, D.F.: Centro de Estudios Históricos, Colegio de México, 1987).

⁶⁹ Ma. de los Angeles Romero Frizzi, *Economía Y Vida De Los Españoles En La Mixteca Alta, 1519-1720*, (Mexico, D.F: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1990).

⁷⁰ Woodrow Wilson Borah, *Silk Raising in Colonial Mexico*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1943); Woodrow Wilson Borah and Sherburne Friend Cook, *The Population of Central Mexico in 1548; an Analysis of the Suma de Vistas de Pueblos*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960).

⁷¹ Ronald Spores, *The Mixtecs in Ancient and Colonial Times*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984). Ronald Spores, *The Mixtec Kings and Their People*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967); Ronald Spores, *An Archaeological Settlement Survey of the Nochixtlan Valley, Oaxaca*, (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University, 1972); Ronald Spores and Patricia A Andrews, *Ethnohistory* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986).

and service to the community. The tradition dates back to pre-Columbian times and continues to be practiced today. I analyze Spanish- and Zapotec-language archival documents produced from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, including the *Vocabulario* compiled by fray Juan de Córdova, to detect practices related to guelaguetza in several Central Valley Zapotec communities. My analysis is intended to promote our understanding of how a fundamental Zapotec system of collaboration and exchange compares to similar systems documented for other societies in Mesoamerica, and how it constitutes a key cultural trait of Mesoamerican societies.

Chapter one presents the historical trajectory of the documentary record, and the context in which Zapotec alphabetic writings were produced. I begin by tracing the ancient origins of inscription in Oaxaca and the function of this writing, focusing on the Postclassic period, especially the centuries immediately before the arrival of Europeans to Oaxaca. I then examine how the Dominicans introduced a new system of writing, applying the Roman alphabet to the Zapotec language, as other religious orders did in other parts of Mesoamerica. I examine the earliest examples of Zapotec-language writings, the church-sponsored works produced by friars in collaboration with Zapotec male elites, and the archival texts that followed those initial works done under the auspices of the Dominicans. This chapter highlights indigenous contributions to the creation of the writings that serve as sources for my study of guelaguetza, as well as related traditional practices that sustained and defined Zapotec communities in this period.

Chapter two describes the organization of Zapotec communities and society. I analyze the structure and composition of local government, both hereditary leaders and the cabildo, and the roles and responsibilities of Zapotec leaders toward those whom they governed. A detailed description of a Zapotec wedding in 1593 shows how guelaguetza united all members of society in the celebration of this life cycle ritual.

Chapter three describes the practice of *guelaguetza* as a Zapotec code of conduct that originated in the Postclassic period, when political and economic transformations drove groups from the site of Monte Albán into the Central Valley floor. The archeological record, especially Zapotec genealogical registers called *lápidas*, depict marriages and wedding rituals during this very important transition period. I propose that the ritual giving of gifts to royal couples is the origin of *guelaguetza*. I consider the development of *guelaguetza* as a sharing system that allowed Zapotec elites to govern important sites throughout the Central Valleys, where they could control valuable resources such as water and agricultural lands. I use colonial documentation to support my thesis that the system enabled Zapotec societies to maintain control of most of their ancestral lands, and that *guelaguetza* determined how Zapotecs regulated households' obligations to communities while meeting colonial demands.

Chapter four examines an important case study from the criminal record that sheds light on what happened when a community's leaders abandoned the principles of *guelaguetza*. Representatives of the community of Tlacolula brought charges against don Domingo de Mendoza, the Zapotec *cacique y gobernador* of the community in the second half of the sixteenth century, for abusing his authority and failing to reciprocate the gifts and labor that he had received through the *guelaguetza* system. The case highlights complex issues of social responsibility, traditional practices, and colonial changes. The chapter reveals how Zapotecs negotiated with and, if necessary, challenged local elites when colonial changes threatened to tear the social fabric of the community. This chapter also examines the roles of individuals and households who participated in the practice of *guelaguetza* in the community of Tlacolula.

Chapter five concludes in two principal ways. The first part summarizes the main findings of the four substantive chapters, which describe and document the practice of

guelaguetza in the Postclassic and colonial periods, and evaluate its significance for the sustenance and survival of Zapotec communities. The second part of the conclusion provides evidence for the continued practice of guelaguetza in the Zapotec regions of Oaxaca in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and up to the present day.

CHAPTER ONE

Zapotec Historical Records

Costumbre de tierra o pueblo. *Vt supra, quélahualache, tichapea hualáache.*

Lo que pide a los parientes y amigos el que se quiere casar, para ayuda a la costa. *Quèlaquéza.*

Bendezir lo que comían los indios que era haciendo la falva echar o derramar vn poquito en la tierra. *Tiquilla pitaoa, cotilla.* Era aque pitao el dios, y reuerenciauanlo afsi.

Libar lo cual era sacrificar o hazer la salva de lo que comian en las fiestas que hacian, derramando un poquito en el suelo o sobre la sepultura de sus padres, o a los dioses que reverenciavan. *Tiquillapitaoa, coti, cum ly,* lo que derramavan o arrojavan, lo qual era un bocadito o un traguito, vide sacrificar.

Entries associated with traditions, gifts and blessings in Fray Juan de Córdova, *Vocabulario en lengua çapoteca* (1578)¹

The Zapotec writing tradition, began over 2500 years ago, it is one of the earliest known writing systems in the Americas.² The earliest monoliths attributed to Zapotec culture highlight ancient political events, including alliances, wars, conquests, and marriages.³ Calendrical symbols on the carved monuments attest to an ability to record the passage of time and to mark

¹ Fray Juan de [C]órdova, *Vocabulario en lengua çapoteca* (Mexico: Impresso por Pedro Charte y Antonio Ricardo, 1578): C96r: “Costumbre de tierra o pueblo”; and C247r: “Lo que pide a los parientes y amigos el que se quiere casar”; and 53v: “Bendezir lo que comían”; and C243v: “Libar lo cual era sacrificar o hazer la salva de lo que comian en las fiestas que hacian, derramando un poquito en el suelo o sobre la sepultura de sus padres, o a los dioses que reverenciavan.”

² For the earliest Zapotec writing examples and the development of this system, see Javier Urcid, *Zapotec Hieroglyphic Writing*, Studies in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology, no. 34 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001). Also, Maria de los Angeles Romero Frizzi, *Escritura zapoteca: 2,500 años de historia* (México: CIESAS: Porrúa: CONACULTA, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2003). Other Mesoamerican writing systems that developed over 2500 years ago are the Olmec and Maya writing systems.

³ See Javier Urcid’s contribution on Southwestern Mesoamerican scribal traditions where he discusses the surfaces used in early Zapotec writing in, Elizabeth Hill Boone and Gary Urton, *Their Way of Writing: Scripts, Signs, and Pictographies in Pre-Columbian America* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2011), 111-148.

cosmological events.⁴ The writing system was used for both religious and political purposes; the symbols served as mnemonic devices for literate elites who narrated their ancestors' accomplishments at lordly feasts.⁵ Genealogical registers highlight marriage networks across various kingdoms in the Oaxacan central Valley. While the concept of *guelaguetza* is not immediately visible in these historical records, I have identified and traced pre-Columbian representations of ritual actions and symbols that continue to be used in modern-day *guelaguetza* practices.

In this chapter, I offer a new perspective on reading Zapotec records produced during the colonial period. For the most part, the colonial record mentions *guelaguetza* indirectly, describing *guelaguetza* practices without using the actual word "*guelaguetza*." Since the historical archives contain mainly legal transactions that deal with property, or records resulting from alleged crimes, the indigenous system of collaboration and exchange tends to be excluded or not mentioned explicitly in the sources. Zapotecs used *guelaguetza* in times of peace rather than conflict.⁶ However, a close reading of sources produced by Zapotec writers, as well as those written by Spaniards, do include direct or indirect references to this system.⁷ In a few rare examples, I found direct references in the Zapotec-language documents to the word itself, as in the will of Sebastiana de Mendoza, written in Tlacoahuaya in 1675, and in documents from

⁴ For an important study of the Zapotec calendar see, José Alcina Franch, *Calendario y religión entre los zapotecos* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1993).

⁵ Joyce Marcus compares elite traditions between the Maya and the Zapotec in her chapter called "Royal Families, Royal Texts" in, Diane Z. Chase and Arlen F. Chase, *Mesoamerican Elites: An Archaeological Assessment* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 221-241. Marcus defines elite status in these societies as a hereditary privilege resulting from divine ancestry. A second class consisted of commoners who were born into the non-celestial class, but who enjoyed the protection and beneficence of ruling elites.

⁶ Excerpt in AGN Civil 822. Case of the community of Tlacolula against their local Zapotec governor Don Domingo de Mendoza, discussed in Chapter 4.

⁷ Fray Juan de Córdova included several words for ideas, activities and feasts related to *guelaguetza*, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Teitipac, in 1614 and 1626.⁸ The earliest evidence of *guelaguetza* comes from a criminal case, recorded in 1576; although this case does not refer to the term *guelaguetza*, a Zapotec witness in the proceedings describes the tradition as a *uso y costumbre*.

If it is clear that the word and the concept of *guelaguetza* appear in records from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the origin of the system is much less clear. It is very likely that the system is ancient, dating at least to the late Postclassic period. But many questions remain. How are we to determine the origin of the system? How do the sources explain the system? What do Spanish sources reveal about Zapotec culture and society? These are some of the main questions that I analyze in this chapter.

Zapotec Discourse

This chapter examines writings produced by Zapotec scribes in the Valley of Oaxaca during the colonial period, from the middle of the sixteenth century to the late eighteenth century. Previous studies of the Zapotecs in this period have relied overwhelmingly on Spanish-language documents. The Zapotec language family consists of several diverse branches, spoken in several geographical areas of Oaxaca: the Northern Sierra, the Southern Sierra, the Central Valleys and the Isthmus.⁹ Zapotec languages, each commonly referred to as "Zapotec", belong to the Otomanguean stock, which also includes the neighboring Chinantec and Mixtec languages. Like all other Mesoamerican groups, Zapotecs possess a very strong oral tradition, and most of

⁸ For direct references to *guelaguetza* in archival documentation, see AGEO Alcaldías Mayores 19: 31 for Tlacoahuaya, 1675; AGN T 256: 2 for Teitipac 1614 and 1626.

⁹ For classifications of Zapotecan languages, see, Smith Stark, Thomas. "Algunas isoglosas zapotecas." In *Clasificación de las lenguas indígenas de México: Memorias del III Coloquio Internacional del Lingüística Mauricio Swadesh*, ed. Christina Buenrostro et al. (Mexico City: UNAM y Instituto Nacional de Lenguas Indígenas, 2008), 69-134.

their historical knowledge has been shared through verbal communication. New scholarship in the field of linguistics has allowed us to understand how much the oral manifestation of Central Valley Zapotec has changed from the sixteenth century until now.¹⁰

Zapotec elites controlled the writing tradition and ensured that histories recorded important political, economic, social and religious events. Recent scholarship in Zapotec studies provides new understanding of the language, the culture and the societies as they developed on their own terms and for which the historical actors produced records. Archaeological evidence points to Zapotec achievements such as the maintenance of trade routes, sophisticated craft production, monumental architecture, large-scale agricultural production, and a long-standing pictographic writing system. Urcid, who has conducted extensive studies of Zapotec hieroglyphs, contends, “as far as currently known, Zapotec writing constitutes one of the earliest scribal traditions in Mesoamerica; it also has one of the longest evolutionary trajectories.”¹¹ As a result of recent developments in indigenous scholarship, Mesoamericanists agree that the peoples of Oaxaca possessed a thriving pictographic and logographic tradition in ancient times that was developing in the direction of a phonetic writing system.¹² Until today, not one pre-Columbian Zapotec screenfold manuscript or “codex” has been found, but Mixtec codices contain references to Zapotec lords and kingdoms and, in addition, dozens of cloth *lienzos* and hundreds of

¹⁰ Important work on the development of Zapotec comes from the field of linguistics. See, Cantú, Roberto & Aaron Sonnenschein (eds.). *Tradition and Innovation in Mesoamerican Cultural History*. LINCOM Studies in Anthropology 16, (Munich: Lincom, 2011). Galant, Michael. “Kinship Terms in Colonial Valley Zapotec.” In Cantú & Sonnenschein (Munich: Lincom 2011), 65-73. Lillehaugen, Brook Danielle. “Los usos y significados de loh ‘cara’ en el zapoteco del valle colonial”. In *Estructuras, lenguas y hablantes. Estudios en Homenaje a Thomas C. Smith Stark*. Rebeca Barriga Villanueva and Esther Hererra Zendejas (eds.). (Mexico D.F., 2014), 417-449. Munro, Pamela. “Evidence about Proto-Zapotec from a Colonial Document”. In Cantú & Sonnenschein, 39-53. Smith, Stark, Thomas C. “La flexión de tiempo, aspecto y modo en el verbo del zapoteco colonial del valle de Oaxaca.” In *Memorias del Coloquio francisco Belmar*, ed. by Ausencia López Cruz and Michael Swanton, 377-419. (Oaxaca, México: Biblioteca Francisco de Burgoa, UABJO; Fundación Alfredo Harp Helú Oaxaca, 2008).

¹¹ Javier Urcid, *Zapotec Hieroglyphic Writing*, Studies in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology, no. 34 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001), 1.

¹² An excellent source for early Zapotec writing is the monograph by Urcid, *Ibid.*

Zapotec-language documents, written in the roman alphabet on paper, survive from the colonial period.¹³ Until recent times, the limited use of Zapotec-produced sources has posed a serious challenge for scholars studying the history of this distinctive Mesoamerican society and culture.

Zapotec Literacy Before the Spanish Conquest

The Zapotec were a literate society. San José Mogote, the first important Zapotec settlement (ca. 1500-500 BCE), and Monte Albán (ca. 500 BCE-750 CE), a major Zapotec administrative center, were centers for the development of Zapotec writing. Both sites played a significant role in the formation of political, economic and religious institutions in the Central Valley over the course of several centuries.¹⁴ Evidence of Zapotec writing at San José Mogote dates to circa 600 BCE, whereas Monte Albán's writing dates to its founding, circa 500 BCE. In terms of monumental architecture, these centers showcase the best of Zapotec achievement. Monte Albán reached its zenith at a time when polities from the three Zapotec arms of the Oaxacan central valley (Etla, Tlacolula, Zaachila) came together and organized their resources.¹⁵ Monte Albán was then occupied continuously for approximately one thousand years, but was gradually abandoned in the Late Classic period (c. 800 C.E.). By the time the Spaniards arrived in the sixteenth century the site was used mainly as a religious ceremonial center. Early Zapotec written histories were carved on stone slabs called *stelae*, and date to approximately 500 BCE. The upright-standing monuments record important leaders and dates associated with their lives.

¹³ One of the most recently located Zapotec lienzos is from the Central Valleys, Michel R Oudijk et al., *Los lienzos pictográficos de Santa Cruz Papalutla Oaxaca* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México: Fundación Alfredo Harp Helú, 2010).

¹⁴ Kent V Flannery and Joyce Marcus, *Zapotec Civilization: How Urban Society Evolved in Mexico's Oaxaca Valley* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), Chapter 1.

¹⁵ Kent V Flannery and Joyce Marcus, *The Cloud People: Divergent Evolution of the Zapotec and Mixtec Civilizations* (New York: Academic Press, 1983), 81.



Fig. 27.—Estela 2: (Frente.)

Figure 1.1. Estela Zapoteca 2. Source: Alfonso Caso, *Las estelas zapotecas* (1928), 128.

Despite the importance of both monumental sites, it was not until the early twentieth century that their importance became known, when the Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnografía financed the excavations of Mexican anthropologists in the wake of the Mexican

Revolution.¹⁶ Anthropologists Manuel Gamio and Alfonso Caso undertook the first serious scholarly study of these monuments, contributing valuable information to the history of ancient Oaxacan societies.

Caso's work was especially important in revealing the epigraphical contents of the Zapotec *stelae*. Among his findings, Caso claimed that enemies of Monte Albán had desecrated the Zapotec *stelae* in the aftermath of battles.¹⁷ Such subversive acts were intended to delete historical accounts recorded by the lords who commissioned the written monuments. Specifically, carved names on the stone surfaces were damaged, a tradition seen elsewhere in Mesoamerica. Caso's analysis of the *stelae* also describes the consistent use of day and number signs associated with the Zapotec calendar. The symbols for these day signs also appear on Zapotec funeral urns and jewelry found in elite burials.¹⁸ Caso compared his findings of Zapotec hieroglyphs to observations in the sixteenth-century *Arte de la lengua Zapoteca* by fray Juan de Córdova, in which the Dominican friar included a detailed description of Zapotec calendar days and numbers.¹⁹ Caso made a powerful case for the thesis that it was "impossible that a people had employed an artistic style and writing, when they worked on stone or clay, and an entirely

¹⁶ The pioneering work was based on preliminary excavations and comparisons to studies done for the Nahua and Maya regions, and to this day, the published findings remain central to Zapotec writing studies. See for example, Ignacio Bernal et al., *3000 Years of Art and Life in Mexico, as Seen in the National Museum of Anthropology, Mexico City*. (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1968). Alfonso Caso, *Las Estelas Zapotecas*, Monografías Del Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnografía (México: Talleres gráficos de la nación, 1928). José Alcina Franch, *Calendario y religión entre los zapotecos* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1993).

¹⁷ Caso, *Las Estelas Zapotecas*.

¹⁸ Alfonso Caso, *Lapidaria y orfebrería en Oaxaca*, 1. ed, Valores de Oaxaca (Oaxaca: Casa de la Cultura Oaxaqueña: Dirección de Comunicación Social del Gobierno del Estado, 1990); Alfonso Caso, *Urnas De Oaxaca*, Memorias Del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (México: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1952).

¹⁹ Caso, *Las Estelas Zapotecas*, 18.

different style and writing if they worked the same representations with a brush.”²⁰ Caso concluded that the Zapotecs had developed an elaborate system of writing and record-keeping.²¹

Over the course of the twentieth century, many scholars commented on the significance of the stone carvings that depicted the so-called *danzantes* at Monte Albán and San José Mogote, whose dates span a millennium and a half, from around 500 BCE to 1000 CE. Some of the first scholars, for example, claimed that the stone carvings at Monte Albán portrayed the life transformations of males who were chosen to be priests at a young age, castrated and initiated into the life of priesthood and eventually honored in Zapotec lore, elevating their existence to a supernatural degree.²² In recent years, thanks to more information and new technologies, scholars have agreed that the figures on the more than three hundred so-called *danzante* stelae are not dancers at all, but rather important individuals who were sacrificed as a result of war.²³ Many symbols found in the stelae attest to a shared history with the Mixtec, a neighboring culture group that had entered the Valley of Oaxaca, from the Mixtec region to the northwest, in the Postclassic period.²⁴

²⁰ Ibid., 12.

²¹ In a similar vein, Miguel Leon-Portilla reminds us that Mesoamerican lords held books and writing in high esteem. “De los libros sagrados se sabía que los sacerdotes los guardaban y cuidaban de enriquecer su contenido. De esos libros y de otros sobre las historias del origen del pueblo, los linajes de los señores, las guerras y los tributos, muchos tenían noticia, aunque reconocían que competía a los señores, los sabios y los funcionarios, su consulta y custodia. Algunos cantos con expresiones como las que ya hemos visto, hablan con ferviente admiración de esos libros, los que exaltaban el recuerdo de grandes acontecimientos o los que podían ayudar a comprender el destino del hombre en la tierra.” See, Miguel León Portilla, *Códices: los antiguos libros del nuevo mundo* (México, D.F.: AGÜilár, 2003), 64.

²² Javier Urcid, *Zapotec Hieroglyphic Writing*. Also, Javier Urcid, *Escritura Zapoteca Prehispánica: Nuevas Aportaciones*, 1. ed, Contribución No. 4 del Proyecto Especial Monte Albán 1992-1994 (Oaxaca: INAH, 1994).

²³ Kent V Flannery et al., *Excavations at San José Mogote I: the Household Archaeology* (Ann Arbor: Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan, 2005); Joyce Marcus and Kent V Flannery, *Zapotec Civilization: How Urban Society Evolved in Mexico's Oaxaca Valley* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996).

²⁴ Flannery and Marcus, *The Cloud People*.



Fig. 57.—Estela 11 y una de las figuras de “Los danzantes.”

Figure 1.2. Estelae 11 and one of the danzante figures depicted in a Zapotec stelae. Source: Alfonso Caso, *Las estelas zapotecas* (1928), 158.

Like Mesoamerican religious specialists, Zapotec scribes belonged to the elite class. Scribes developed their logophonetic writing methods from the sixth through the tenth centuries. Unfortunately, the political demise of Monte Albán in the eleventh century and the fragmentation

of powerful Zapotec kingdoms in the region arrested the development of the writing system. Mixtec and Zapotec kingdoms vied for power and control of natural resources and engaged in a series of battles, strategic marriages, and political maneuvers that served to gain control of natural resources at the expense of smaller, less powerful kingdoms. By this time, indigenous writers used brushstrokes to record local political relationships, often involving diverse culture groups that were geographically distant and spoke a different language.²⁵

By the Late Classic period, described as Monte Albán IIIb-IV (AD 600-900), Zapotecs added a new record-keeping tradition to their existing monumental architectural styles. Marriages were recorded on stone slabs, reminiscent of the earlier stelae, but these genealogical registers, as they have been called, were different in purpose and style.²⁶ The marriage or genealogical registers were smaller than the stelae of the Classic period; the stelae probably stood in the couple's palace until their death, when the stone slab was moved into their tomb as part of the burial ritual. The stone registers were made to commemorate individuals who joined their kingdoms through marriage. Central Valley Zapotecs governed these local states through the organization of reciprocal and shared labor, the agricultural harvest, and specialized craft production. The wedding feast, including the ritual exchange of gifts, is a recurring image inscribed on the stone monuments, which span a period of more than 300 years. Some twenty *lápidas* (as they are called in Spanish) produced during the Postclassic period, depict Zapotec

²⁵ For a detailed example of possible highland Mexican influence on a Maya text, see John M.D. Pohl, "Screenfold Manuscripts of Highland Mexico and Their Possible Influence on the Codex Madrid: A Summary." In *Codex Madrid: New Approaches to Understanding an Ancient Maya Manuscript*, ed. by Gabrielle Vail and Anthony Aveni, (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2004), 368-413.

²⁶ The very first monograph to collect all of the marriage registers in one place was Caso, *Las Estelas Zapotecas*.

marriage scenes.²⁷ These lápidas have been found *in situ* throughout the Oaxacan Central Valleys, in Noriega (near Zaachila) and Cuilapan; but several were excavated with little or no regard for their archaeological context and are attributed to Lambityeco, Macuilxóchitl, Matatlán and Mitla.²⁸

I argue that the Zapotec wedding celebrations of the Postclassic period recorded in the stone sculptures are evidence of the origin of *guelaguetza*. Through these records we can characterize the social connections, economic power and the people associated with the communities represented in the sculptures. The sculptures coincide with the time period that marked the expansion of Zapotec polities into the Central Valleys. The registers include supernatural symbols such as the Zapotec sky band which was carved on the upper section of the monument. This convention is found in all the genealogical registers, as the sky band was meant to preside over the marriage ceremony depicted in the registers. The slabs also include names, dates, and other calendrical information. These registers also included flora and fauna associated with the marriage ritual. Finally, the registers include elders, or ancestors. In describing Oaxacan monumental sculpture, Kubler divided these into four separate and distinct styles.²⁹ The stone registers depict not only important elite marriages, but reflect a powerful tradition that Zapotecs in the Central Valley adopted as their code of conduct. This conduct developed into the *guelaguetza* system which is described in detail in Chapter 3.

²⁷ See Javier Urcid's chapter called "La lápida grabada de Santiago Matatlán. Una Mirada al lenguaje visual de los antiguos registros genealógicos zapotecas (600-900 después de Cristo)" in Sebastián van Doesburg, ed. *Pictografía y escritura alfabética en Oaxaca* (Oaxaca, México: Instituto Estatal de Educación Pública de Oaxaca, 2008), 23-52.

²⁸ Flannery and Marcus, *The Cloud People*, 190-197.

²⁹ After describing two other classes of stone sculpture, he writes, "The third class (Plate 64B) belongs to the Zapotec valley towns of central Oaxaca, such as Etla, Zaachila, and Tlacolula. The slabs present a man and a woman seated beneath a sky symbol: frequently a single enthroned figure is shown. This class probably relates to Periods IIIb and IV of the Monte Alban chronology." See George Kubler, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient America: The Mexican, Maya, and Andean Peoples* / George Kubler., 2d ed. (Baltimore: Penguin, 1975), 94-95.



Figura 1.3. Postclassic Oaxaca. A very unusual genealogical register for its circular shape, attributed to Zaachila. Source: Alfonso Caso, *Las estelas zapotecas* (1928), 185.

During this same period, neighboring societies also created records that refer to Zapotecs. For example, the famous Borgia Group codices of the Postclassic period speak to the connected histories of ancient Oaxacan societies.³⁰ It is through these codices that we understand some of the economic and political motivations behind the Mixtec-Zapotec political alliance achieved through marriage, such as that of Lady 4 Rabbit from the Mixtec city of Tilantongo who married the Zapotec Lord 5 Flower and founded the powerful Zaachila dynasty that controlled trade routes in the Central Valley. Attempts to control these trade routes and natural resources led to a war between the Zapotec and the Nahuatl in the late fifteenth century, which came to an end after the marriage of Lady Coyolicatzin, Moctecuzoma's sister, and Cocijoeza, a Zapotec lord. The

³⁰ See Michel Oudjik's chapter, "The Postclassic Period in the Valley of Oaxaca: the Archaeological and Ethnohistorical records" in Jeffrey P. Blomster, *After Monte Albán: Transformation and Negotiation in Oaxaca, Mexico* (Boulder, Colo.: University Press of Colorado, 2008), 109.

content of these codices attests to the shared values of the Mixtec, Nahuatl and Zapotec, three separate cultures that were connected through the rites and rituals that brought them together.

In addition to Zapotec written histories, artifacts and mural paintings found in ceremonial burial sites such as Chalcatongo, in the Mixteca Alta, and Mitla, Lambityeco and Zaachila in the Zapotec culture area of the Valley of Oaxaca, attest to the celebrations and exchanges between ethnically separate societies.³¹ The Mesoamerican logographic and pictographic writing tradition was capable of communicating information among people who spoke different languages.³² Cultural symbols and signs were shared by many different groups. Gifts presented in Zapotec ritual feasts, listed by Córdova as *cònjajuije*, were familiar to many other groups in Mesoamerica.³³ Items and goods such as cacao beans, corn, woven textiles and pottery were known throughout Mesoamerica, and were associated with marriage gifts.

Studies of Mixtec and Zapotec societies have found that writings recorded the lives of important historical actors.³⁴ Like many other Mesoamerican groups, Mixtecs and Zapotecs attributed supernatural traits to deceased ancestors.³⁵ The fine distinction between lord and god is commonplace in the history of Mesoamerica. Zapotecs often attributed supernatural traits to their ancestors in their historical monuments. Joyce Marcus summarized the phenomenon: “An important aspect of Zapotec religion was ancestor worship, especially the veneration of royal ancestors. This practice was widely misunderstood by the sixteenth-century Spaniards, who

³¹ Studies of Mixtec codices reveal important alliances among various groups. See Byland, Bruce E. and John M.D. Pohl. *In the Realm of Eight Deer: The Archaeology of the Mixtec Codices* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994).

³² See Michael D Coe and Rex Koontz, *Mexico: From the Olmecs to the Aztecs* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2013), Chapter 9.

³³ C288r: “Ofrenda lo que se offrece. Cònjajuije, xillàa.l.gòna.”

³⁴ John M.D. Pohl, *The Legend of Eight Deer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

³⁵ See Robert Lloyd Williams, *Lord Eight Wind of Suchixtlan and the Heroes of Ancient Oaxaca: Reading History in the Codex Zouche-Nuttall* (University of Texas Press, 2010), Chapter 9.

usually mistook the images of venerated, deceased rulers for the ‘idols’ or ‘gods.’”³⁶ Dominican friars diligently recorded the names of ancestor gods in the sixteenth century. Caso listed names of Zapotec lords found in the *Relaciones Geográficas*, the questionnaire ordered by King Phillip II of Spain to gather information on the peoples, towns, and territories of the viceroyalty of New Spain, a process that began in 1579 and was not completed everywhere until 1585. Gods in the Central Valley included: *Coquebila*, described by a friar as a god of Macuilxochitl; *Pichanato* a low-ranking god of Chichicapa; *Coquihuani*, god of light from Tlalixtac; *Tonaji Belachina* of Coatlan, who was of Mixtec origin; and the god and goddess of Tlacolula named *Coqui Bezelao* and *Xonaxi Quecuya*, respectively.³⁷ People in the Central Valley venerated representations or embodiments of these deities in stone or wood. The ancestors shared histories and commemorated momentous events over large communal meals, presided over by four central *cocijos* or deities, to whom the lords of each community paid homage. All was planned according to the Zapotec ritual calendar, that Córdoba listed as *piye or pije*.³⁸ These ancestor gods had different communities of provenance, from both the Zapotec and Mixtec regions. They likely spoke more than one language.

Multilingualism was a necessity for the Mesoamerican elite class. In addition to rulers, elites included skilled artisans, specialists such as traveling merchants, called *penitàho* in Zapotec, and writers known as *huezèequichi*.³⁹ Multilingualism was especially important for the top tiers of noble society, because as intermediaries between governing elites and the local

³⁶ Flannery and Marcus, *The Cloud People*, 346.

³⁷ Caso, *Las Estelas Zapotecas*, 21-23.

³⁸ See the description of the *calendario* in Juan de Córdoba, *Arte del idioma zapoteco* (México: Ediciones Toledo, 1987), 201-204.

³⁹ C265r: “Mercador que merca. Penitàho, huecìyaho”; see also C182v: “Escribano o escritor. Huezèequichi, huecàayye, huecàaquichi, huechijba, ttichalàniquichi, huecòo, colòotichaquìchi.”

community, lords needed to facilitate communication.⁴⁰ Oaxacan genealogies which recorded marriage alliances between Mixtec and Zapotec noble families had to be arranged by people who communicated effectively in at least two of these languages.⁴¹ Creating codices for an internal audience meant that the content had to follow in the tradition of Mesoamerican record-keeping, which included public reading by trained orators and display at lordly feasts.⁴² The inter-ethnic marriages depicted in the lienzos of Tabaá and Guevea for example, reveal the ceremonial procession of individuals who traveled great distances to attend the wedding celebration of important ladies and lords. They presented gift offerings at the wedding feasts that represented the people's regions of origin, as well as their political and social connections. Well-connected, multilingual people called *pochtecas* in Nahuatl traversed diverse Mesoamerican regions, carrying books with them in their mercantile journeys.⁴³ The *pochtecas* also carried news to the places to which they traveled.

The surviving pre-Columbian Zapotec written evidence does not provide a complete picture of indigenous intellectual preoccupations. The same can be said about the Zapotec-language sources produced under the auspices of the church. Of the few surviving pre-Columbian codices that contain evidence of Zapotec discourse, most are political or economic in their content. Many with religious content were probably destroyed because friars considered

⁴⁰ Nahuatl became the lingua franca of Postclassic Mesoamerica, precisely for this reason. As the Mexica-Tenochca consolidated power through war and intermarriage, lords in subject communities were forced to learn Nahuatl.

⁴¹ Oudjik used the lienzos produced during the early years of the colonial period to map out the lineages of ruling families from preconquest times through the colonial period. See Oudjik, Michel R. *The Second Conquest: An Ethnohistory of a Cajonos Zapotec Village & the Lienzo of Tabaá I* (Wampum/Leiden, 13, 1995). Oudjik also studied the Mixtec-Zapotec political marriages in his *Historiography of the Benizaa: the Postclassic and Early Colonial Periods, 1000-1600 A.D.* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Research School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies, Univ. Leiden, CNWS publications; 2000), 84.

⁴² John M.D Pohl. *The Politics of Symbolism in the Mixtec Codices* (Vanderbilt University Publications in Anthropology, no. 46. Nashville, Tenn: Vanderbilt University, 1994).

⁴³ León Portilla, *Códices*, 73.

them to be evil in nature. The writing of Zapotec, using the Spanish version of the roman alphabet, provided a new space for indigenous written expression. Zapotec alphabetic writings contain specific, significant information, considering the historical context of the writing in the colonial period. These mundane records allow glimpses into the lived experiences of Zapotec men and women within their communities, during times of great change.

Zapotec Culture and Society Through a Spanish Imperial Lens

By 1528, the Dominican order had begun to settle within select indigenous communities of Oaxaca. The friars needed to communicate with people if they hoped to convert them to Christianity. Because the Nahuas had colonized several Central Valley communities in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, many Oaxacan lords already spoke some Nahuatl by the time the Spaniards arrived. There was a learning exchange between indigenous leaders and colonizers, including Spaniards and Nahuas from Central Mexico. Initially, Oaxacan native lords communicated with the Nahuas who traveled with the Spaniards; eventually the native leaders learned Spanish, while the friars took to learning indigenous languages.

In the second half of the sixteenth century the Dominican friars, Pedro de Feria and Juan de Córdova, employed Zapotec-language native speakers in the production of the *Doctrina Christiana en lengua castellana y zapoteca* (1567), the *Arte en lengua capoteca* (1578), and the *Vocabulario en lengua capoteca* (1578). The first Dominican to publish a Zapotec language book was Feria, in 1567. Feria's contributed immensely to our understanding of Colonial Central Valley Zapotec historical records by employing native-language speakers, who translated his

doctrina book into Zapotec.⁴⁴ The evidence suggests that the Zapotec speakers who worked on Feria's project carefully selected Zapotec words to fulfill basic requirements established by the friar's ambitions.

Most of what we know about the colonial-era Zapotec language comes from the work of a Dominican named Juan de Córdova, who lived in the Central Valley community of Tlacoachahuaya in the sixteenth century.⁴⁵ He dedicated most of his life to learning Zapotec, which he accomplished with the help of male Zapotecs from several communities. He then collected information on Zapotec culture and eventually published a *vocabulario*, a one-way dictionary from Spanish to Zapotec. His *Vocabulario en lengua capoteca, hecho y recopilado por el muy reverendo padre fray Iuan de Cordoua de la orden de los predicadores, que refide en esta nueva Espana*, printed in 1578, provides a foundation for the study of the colonial Zapotec-language documents used in this dissertation.

Córdova's descriptions of Zapotec allude to the complexity of an indigenous language that treated things, animals, concepts and ideas that were new to the Iberians. In his prologue, Córdova took time to explain why his *vocabulario* contained such detailed and complicated entries. He wrote, "These Zapotec Indians gave names even to those things to which people had never applied names. Who has seen a name given to the sound made by a bell, that which it says when it makes a sound, and to that when the snake moves, and the carriage when it rolls, and to

⁴⁴ Broadwell presents a very convincing hypothesis: that Zapotec speakers were pressed by the friars in the translation of the religious questionnaire, resulting in a "somewhat artificial Zapotec that roughly captures the sense of the Spanish *o*, but doesn't correspond to normal usage." See George Aaron Broadwell, *The Conjunctions of Colonial and Modern Valley Zapotec: Evidence from Feria (1567)* (University at Albany, State University of New York, 2002).

⁴⁵ For a description of the friar's early life see Thomas Smith Stark, "Juan de Córdova como lexicógrafo". In *Guchachi' reza/Iguana rajada, Juchitán*, (Oaxaca, May 1998), 2–13.

the beating and pulsing of the heart, and to the boiling of the pot”?⁴⁶ In addition, "Zapotec," a tonal language, varied according to the speaker's region and even community. Friars failed to mark a speaker's tones in print.

But while extolling the magnitude and complexity of the language, and even humbly admitting that there are many shortcomings in his work, Córdova explained that his work was in line with the scientific tradition of other linguists who had attempted to *raise* the barbarian tongues to the level of superiority of the Latin language, which was not the nature of the “barbarous tongues of low esteem”.⁴⁷ Thus Córdova deemed that the “determined and definite conversion of the barbarous nations of this New Orb of the Occidental Indies” could only be achieved if the conversion were done in the “barbarian” language.⁴⁸ Córdova's calculated introduction to his Vocabulario frames his work along the lines of the erudite scholars who had studied languages intensively, including the Augustinian, Ambrogio Calepino, who published his Latin Dictionary in 1502, and Antonio de Nebrija, who published his *Gramatica Castellana* in 1492.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Córdova wrote: “...que unos mismos vocablos se hallan puestos en diversos lugares porque sirven para todo, y así en todas partes que se hallen. La segunda, por que estos indios zapotecos, aún a las cosas que nunca gente les aplicara nombres se los dan ellos v. g. Quien ha visto dar nombre a los diferentes tañidos de las campanas o lo que dizque dicen cuando suenan, y lo que hace la culebra cuando anda, y la carreta cuando anda y a los latidos y pulsos del corazón , y al hervor de la olla y a otras cosas ansi semejantes aún a los actos que hacen las aves y animales , y a las demás cosas inanimadas y a las que hacen los instrumentos con que hazemos algo , para todo hallan nombres e interjecciones conque las explicar.” See Córdova, page ES (recto), in the opening credits of the Toledo Edition (Mexico 1987).

⁴⁷ “...determinada y definida conversion de las Barbaras naciones, deste Nuevo orbe de Indias Occidentales”. See Córdova, page PAFFADA (recto), in the opening credits of the Toledo Edition (Mexico 1987).

⁴⁸ See Córdova, page vi (recto), in the opening credits of the Toledo Edition, (Mexico 1987).

⁴⁹ Ambrogio Calepino was an Italian friar who lived in the 15th century. In addition to his Latin dictionary, he compiled dictionaries for eleven other languages. Antonio de Nebrija lived in the 15th century he published the first grammar in the Castilian language in 1492. In the prologue to his grammar he wrote, “Language has always been the perfect instrument of empire.” See, Antonio de Nebrija, *Gramatica Castellana* (Madrid: Junta del Centenario, 1946), 11.

Relevant colonial models for Córdoba's work had been completed already by the Franciscans, who were the first of the four religious orders to arrive in Mexico. The prologue by Córdoba alludes to his knowledge of other important indigenous language studies by four religious orders working in the Nahua region.⁵⁰ Córdoba's final versions of his *Vocabulario* and companion *Arte* reflect his use of at least some of these earlier models. His *Vocabulario* is peppered with entries that describe indigenous practices, such as offering drink or food to the gods or *pitaos* by dropping little bits on the ground. The Dominican friar modified his entries with the term "en su antigüedad" (in their antiquity) when he referred to ideas or practices that were not allowed in his present day, and which he attributed to ancient times. For example in an entry for sacrifice he wrote, "*Libate*, which was to sacrifice or save some of what they ate in the parties they [used to make], dropping a little on the ground or over their parent's burial [site], or for the gods to which they paid reverence. *Tiquillapitàoa, cotì*, that which they dropped or threw which was a small bite or a small drink, see *sacrifice*."⁵¹

In Córdoba's introduction to the *Vocabulario* he wrote that several Zapotec individuals from Central Valley communities were employed in the compilation of the work. The collaboration of Zapotec speakers from several different towns suggests degrees of intelligibility between variants of the language in the region. According to the licenses, one requisite for approval was written by someone in the community of Macuilxochitl and it required that "indios

⁵⁰ By 1555 the Franciscan fray Alonso de Molina had already published his first *Vocabulario en Lengua Castellana y Mexicana*, and by 1571 Molina had collaborated with fray Bernardino de Sahagún, in a revised and updated version of his Nahuatl-to-Spanish *Vocabulario*. See "Estudio Preliminar" by Miguel Leon-Portilla, in Fray Alonso de Molina, *Vocabulario en lengua Castellana y Mexicana* (Mexico, Porrúa 1994), xxxvii.

⁵¹ Real Academia Española lists *libar* as "2. Hacer sacrificios u ofrendas a la divinidad. 3. Hacer la libación para el sacrificio." Accessed, online 10/10/2013. <http://lema.rae.es/drae/?val=libar>. See Córdoba 243v: "Libar lo cual era sacrificar o hazer la salva de lo que comian en las fiestas que hacian, derramando un poquito en el suelo o sobre la sepultura de sus padres, o a los dioses que reverenciavan. *Tiquillapitàoa, cotì, cum ly*, lo que derramavan o arrojavan, lo qual era un bocadito o un traguito, vide sacrificar." Córdoba 288r: "Offrecer en reverencia un poquito de lo que tengo de comer como hazian. Vide libar y falva. *Tiquil**lapitàoa, cotilla*. Es cofa de fu antigüedad de los Indios."

hábiles”, those native people “capable” of reviewing, examining and correcting Córdoba’s work, revise the work into an edition worthy of a license for impression, which was ultimately granted by the Secretary named Bachiller Peralta on the 12th of July, 1577.⁵² In another Central Valley community of Ocotlan, two Dominicans, Juan de Villalobos and Domingo Guigelmo wrote on July 11, 1577 that they had employed four Zapotec “naturales” who completed the necessary correction by native speakers of the language.⁵³ Macuilxochitl and Ocotlan were both Zapotec-speaking communities in the Central Valley, located about thirty-five kilometers south of the colonial city of Antequera, but Ocotlan is on the west side of the valley whereas Macuilxochitl is on the east side. Each community is separated by the Sierra Madre Mountain range, about 35 kilometers from each other. Córdoba lived in Tlacoahuaya and spent a great deal of time in Teitipac. These two communities are about five to seven kilometers west of Macuilxochitl, where the friar conducted a significant part of his collecting and transcribing.

⁵² See Córdoba, *Vocabulario*, iii verso.

⁵³ Córdoba wrote: “estos indios zapotecas aun a las cosas que nunca gentes les aplicaron nombres se le dan ellos, quien vido dar nombre a el sonido de la campana. Lo que dizque dice cuando suena, y a lo que hace la culebra cuando anda y a la carreta cuando rueda, y a los latidos y los pulsos del Corazon, y al hervor de la olla...” See Córdoba, *Vocabulario*, ii.

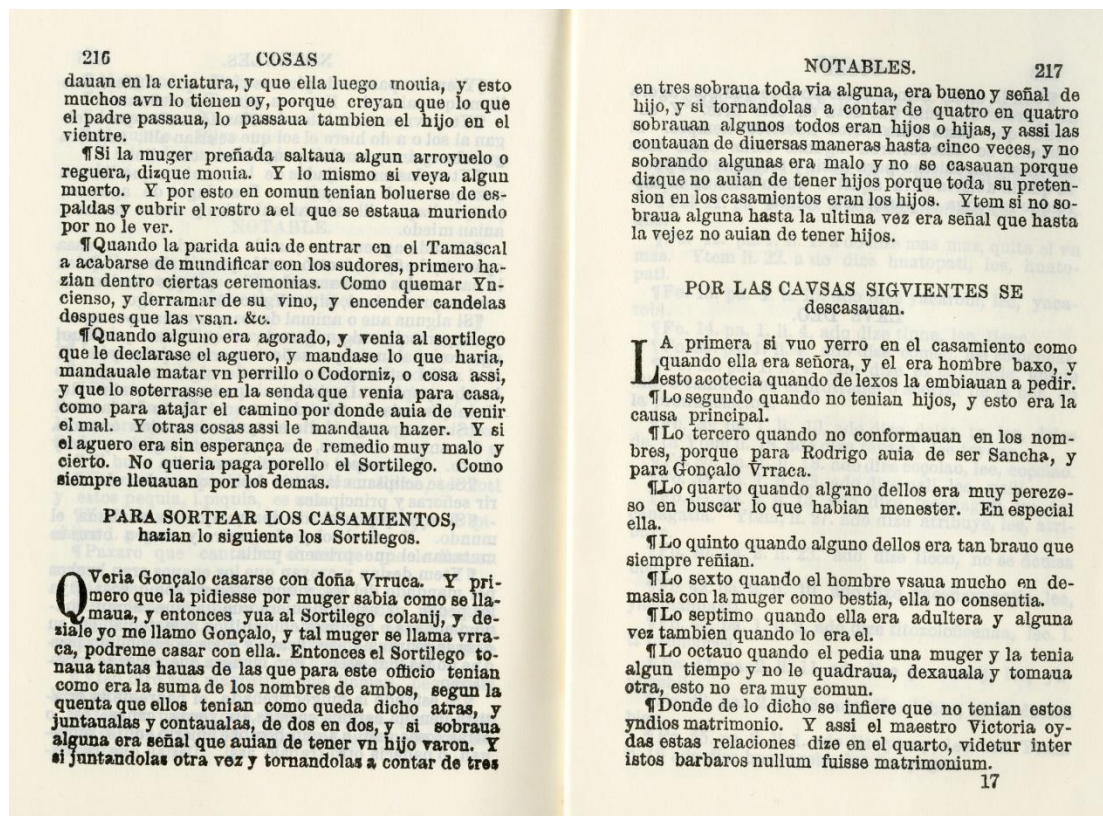


Fig. 1.4. Published in 1578. Pages 216 and 217 from Córdoba's *Arte en la lengua zapoteca* that contain details about the *colanij*, the wedding specialist and the conditions for "unmarriage".

Córdoba dedicated his work to Zapotec language acquisition so that friars could teach the faith to indigenous men and women. In addition to organizing the construction of churches in the Central Valley, he was also in charge of activities related to conversion. As a result, Córdoba became intimately familiar with Zapotec traditions and customs in this early period of contact. For example, Córdoba described Zapotec marriage customs, beginning with the consultation of a marriage specialist called a *colanij*, who was expert in reading the mathematical sum of a couple's names, as seen in figure 1.4. The inquiry would provide answers to questions, such as "would the marriage work?" or "how many children would be born to the couple?" and even the "gender of the children." If the results of the inquiry pointed to the possibility of "no children,"

then the couple would not be married, for according to the friar “the entire goal of marriage was [having] children”.⁵⁴

Due to the instructional purpose of the Dominican Zapotec dictionary, Córdova wrote a separate grammar called the *Arte del Idioma Zapoteco por el P. Fr. Juan de Córdova*, in which he described the verb tenses, grammar, pronunciation and other important linguistic explanations of Zapotec. Córdova was following the model of a Latin grammar. At the end of the work, the Dominican included information that he thought might be significant to a non-Zapotec audience. This information was printed on the very last few pages of the *Arte*, which suggested that if his superiors rejected this information, it could be ignored without affecting the main content. In this addendum, he explained such things as the calendrical cycle of names, and how these naming patterns were crucial to understanding social traditions of marriage. He went on to describe some beliefs held by Zapotecs about curses, the supernatural, pregnancy, childbirth, marital contracts, and the conditions for “unmarriage” or our modern equivalent of divorce. He included these categories under the title of “notables,” marking these as noteworthy to the Christianizing enterprise and saving himself from the Holy Office of the Inquisition, perhaps, well aware of the controversy in New Spain surrounding the documentation of unchristian practices. In his *Arte*, Córdova dedicated fourteen pages to the description of the Zapotec calendar, including the division of the thirteen months, the principal deities and day names.⁵⁵ The detailed description that fray Juan de Córdova included in his *Arte* suggests that he or his source(s) of information had seen a Zapotec calendar and studied its contents carefully.

⁵⁴ Córdova wrote “toda su pretencion en los casamientos eran los hijos” in Córdova, *Arte del idioma zapoteco*, 217.

⁵⁵ In Urcid's study of Córdova's description of the Zapotec calendar, he concluded that the Zapotec consultants who helped the friar with his publication likely showed Córdova a copy of the calendar: “As noted by Seler (1904d:271), it is obvious that Córdova's assistants showed him a codex”. See Urcid, *Zapotec Hieroglyphic Writing*, 89.

A century after Cordoba's work, in the early 1670s, fray Francisco de Burgoa also wrote about Zapotec society. Actually, he wrote an extended history of the accomplishments of the Dominican order in the Oaxacan region, but he included information on the Zapotec, such as his limited description of the community of Teitipac. Burgoa started by providing the meaning of the community's name, focusing on its most notable characteristic. According to the friar, Teitipac was an important Zapotec ceremonial center. Despite the religious prejudice in his description, Burgoa revealed relevant information about Zapotec writing, as he described a long-standing pictographic tradition that existed when the Dominicans reached this community. He described Teitipac as a place of great teaching, as a place where noble and intelligent indigenous men were sent for instruction in the ceremonies of lordly burials. Because Burgoa's work focused on Dominican conversion efforts, he claimed that the most able teachers of the *evangelio* (Catholic doctrine) were sent to instruct Zapotec priests in the Christian doctrine, and that this was done in the Zapotec language. Burgoa acknowledged the use of writing to achieve conversion. He stated that the Dominicans gave the priests Catholic texts so that they would "open their eyes to Satan's deception".⁵⁶ He visited the community and neighboring pueblos of the "pueblo of San Juan Teitipac, which in their Zapotec tongue is called Zeetoba, which means 'another sepulcher' or 'place of burials.'"⁵⁷ Burgoa went on to say that Teitipac was second to Mitla in the "dark rites and rituals that the devil had persuaded them to believe," because it was in Teitipac where elites of non-royal blood were sent to be buried.

Zapotec elites realized the value of reading and writing with the alphabet as soon as they came into close contact with Dominicans. The pre-columbian precedent for writing in

⁵⁶ Ibid., 70.

⁵⁷ Francisco de Burgoa, *Geográfica Descripción De La Parte Septentrional Del Polo Ártico De La América Y Nueva Iglesia De Las Indias Occidentales Y Sitio Astronómico De Esta Provincia De Predicadores De Antequera, Valle De Oaxaca*, 1. ed., 2 vols., *Biblioteca Porrúa* (México: Editorial Porrúa, 1989). Tomo I, 64.

Mesoamerica may have predisposed elites to learning alphabetic writing. The new system was adopted for numerous types of record-keeping. At first, elite boys were instructed in the art of writing by Dominicans. It is unknown whether the *Vocabulario* and *Arte* were actually used to facilitate this instruction, since both works were designed primarily for Spaniards. Presumably, over time, Zapotec elites learned how to read and write the alphabet well enough to teach their (male) children.

Colonial-Era Zapotec Documents

Mundane documents written by Zapotecs over the course of three centuries complement the types of information provided by institutional or official sources written in Spanish. As records produced for an internal audience, Zapotec-language texts provide insight into the lived experiences of men and women within indigenous communities. One observation to be made from reading Zapotec sources is the way in which indigenous people differentiated local things from Iberian introductions. For example, Córdoba lists *hualache* as a word that modifies nouns, denoting "local" or "native," such as *peni hualachea*, "a person of this country", or *nocuànahualàche*, "fruit of this land" (as opposed to fruit from Spain, *nocuàna Castilla*).⁵⁸ *quètaxòpahualàche* was listed as bread of the land made of corn (tortillas), versus Spanish bread made from wheat, *quètaxòpa castilla*.⁵⁹ Turkeys native to the Americas were distinguished from European chickens; "chickens of this land" ('desta tierra' was used to clarify native origin) are listed as *pètehualàche*, *père zàa*.⁶⁰ These terms are attested in the native-

⁵⁸ There at least 40 instances in the dictionary where *hualache* is used as an adjective to signal native nouns. See Córdoba 280r: "Natural de mi patria. peni hualachea, or Córdoba 201r: Fruta de esta tierra. Nocuànahualàche."

⁵⁹ For the bread entries see Córdoba 299r: "Pan de mayz o panes. Quètaxòpahualàche."

⁶⁰ See Córdoba 203r: "Gallina. Pete; gallina desta tierra. Petehualache."

language archival record. In the testament of Domingo Hernandez, for example, written in Teitipac in 1616, the scribe carefully noted distinctions between the two types of fowl (one native to the Americas and one introduced by Spaniards) that Domingo owned by listing, “*tobi pere coçana hualachi—I perehu[alachi]* [And one ‘gozana’ laying turkey hen] *chela tobi pere castila—I pere castila* [And one chicken]”.⁶¹ Turkeys were highly valuable in indigenous society and in guelaguetza transactions.

Another outstanding feature of Zapotec-language sources is the way that Zapotecs referred to the lands on which they lived and cultivated. Practically every document involves land in some way or another, and all lands are named. The tradition of naming fields with proper names was comparable to naming children in families. When Juan Peo and Thomas Hernandez from Teitipac decided to bequeath land to workers and elite members of their pueblo, in 1568 they included the names of their lands.⁶² The lands included the land called *Petayo*, the land called *Quiebeya*, and another plot of land called, *Yoquizee Queco Cabi*. In the same community of Teitipac, in 1598, Domingo Delerida and Balthazar Hernandez settled a dispute over the naturally watered lands that were called *Quelatiye*, and land located at the base of some banana trees, other places that were named include the sites *Guiaza*, and the entire property which had the name of *Quiecati*, and *Zaguegoca*.⁶³ In Huitzo, in 1643, the children of Pedro Hernandez sold four plots which were called *Lachihuitaniy*.⁶⁴ The practice of naming lands continued beyond the colonial period into the twentieth century.⁶⁵

⁶¹ See Zapotexts analyzed document Te 616. 1b. Document from the AGE0 [Case against Don Geronimo de Guzman]. The term ‘coçana’ is another word for guelaguetza. Domingo’s turkey was probably obtained through a guelaguetza offering.

⁶² Zapotexts Te568.

⁶³ Zapotexts Te590.

⁶⁴ Zapotexts Hu643.

Zapotec *escribanos* were responsible of documenting all types of community business, including petitions, letters to Spanish officials, property transactions, and last wills and testaments. The position of escribano was usually a stepping-stone to higher offices on the local *cabildo*, the Spanish-style municipal council that Spaniards installed in all of the *cabeceras* or indigenous head-towns of New Spain.⁶⁶ Escribanos drafted last wills and testaments, which were then signed by some or all of the members of the *cabildo*. One function of the document was to register the status of land held by community members. The document not only declared the transfer of the land, it also reminded its audience of previous owners and defined inter-community relationships by referring to the names and owners of bordering lands.

S.L. Cline observed the multifaceted and upwardly mobile potential of lower-ranking offices, such as that of the escribano, in Nahua Culhuacan.⁶⁷ Although *cabildo* officers were elite members of the community, they were not necessarily literate. Thus as a literate member of the *cabildo*, the escribano fulfilled an important function that required learning the legal formulaic language of his office, and served as a witness to official documentation for all disputes or matters of importance. Thus, this lower-ranking office had the potential to elevate the socioeconomic status of those who held it.

The *escrituras* written by Zapotec scribes testify to the lifestyle and culture of the colonial indigenous household. In 1675 Sebastiana de Mendoza, a wealthy Zapotec woman from

⁶⁵ My family's land, for example, is called *Yanixe*.

⁶⁶ The work by William Hanks analyzes the language used to Christianize the Maya of Yucatan during the first 200 years of colonization. This study includes a detailed analysis of the Maya escribanos who produced documents within the indigenous *cabildo*. See William F. Hanks, *Converting Words: Maya in the Age of the Cross* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 17.

⁶⁷ For a comparative example for the Nahua region see Cline's discussion of escribanos and their roles within and outside the *cabildo* in S. L. Cline, *Colonial Culhuacan, 1580-1600: A Social History of an Aztec Town*, 1986.

the community of Tlacoahuaya bequeathed to her daughters, Gerónima and Lorenza, and her granddaughter named Sebastiana, an array of belongings that included religious paraphernalia, valuable agricultural goods, and finished goods and money.⁶⁸ She divided her property in the following manner: ten magueys, a wool skirt, a cotton huipil, and ten pesos went to her daughter Gerónima.⁶⁹ She gave her granddaughter Sebastiana five magueys and a picture of Saint Sebastian. She did not bequeath her house to anyone specifically, but she gave her daughter Lorenza a total of thirty-five magueys and declared that, as the oldest, she should be in charge of the house and its affairs. Sebastiana had amassed a substantial amount of money, agricultural land and catholic images, suggesting a degree of adaptation to Iberian material culture more typical of elites than commoners. But her list of belongings also includes magueys, which were valuable in the production of mescal, pulque, rope, and a local Zapotec delicacy. Moreover, her huipiles represent traditional attire for women. Córdova's listing of *quietoba*, which he describes as the head of the maguey which the Indians eat grilled, is only one of forty entries for the indigenous uses of maguey.⁷⁰

Forty-five years later, in 1720 a wealthy seventeen-year-old Zapotec woman named María de la Cruz Dionisio lay on her deathbed in the indigenous town of Coyotepec, Oaxaca.⁷¹ In the presence of the local Zapotec government, she requested that her uncles sell some of her European belongings in order to pay for masses upon her death. The document was originally written in Zapotec; in the nineteenth century, it became evidence in a lawsuit over lands that she had bequeathed to her uncles. More importantly, this native-language testament provides

⁶⁸ Archivo General del Estado de Oaxaca, Alcaldías Mayores, legajo 19, expediente 31.

⁶⁹ Pam Munro, Kevin Terraciano, et al. "Sebastiana de Mendoza" (unpublished manuscript).

⁷⁰ Córdova 253v: "Maguey el tronco afado que comen. Quìetòbayèe."

⁷¹ Archivo General del Estado de Oaxaca, Alcaldías Mayores leg. 21, exp. 12. The Testament of María de la Cruz Dionisio, Coyotepec Oaxaca 1720. UCLA Zapotexts manuscript and analysis.

evidence of trade networks involving European luxury goods owned by indigenous people. María de la Cruz Dionisio owned a European style blanket and silk dress which she described as "cobija de cambraya" (shawl from Cambria), finished with the "punta de Castilla" using Spanish terms within the Zapotec text. [*Anna ti nij naa benij guijchija sij ca nij touij couisa decambraya noo punta de Castillia huanee toobi Bytaanij seda na xijnia lacabytanij rij huanee Coo[bysa.]* Notably, María de la Cruz described her uncles as *coqui* or lords who were members of elite Zapotec society.

The Zapotec-language record provides insight into how language informed social relations. *Cica*, according to Fray Juan de Córdova, was used by Zapotecs when speaking to lords in a manner that resembled the reverential speech described for Nahuas by Franciscans. As seen in figure 2.3, Córdova wrote, "there is also in this language, a manner of verbs which we can call reverential, which the indians frequently use to speak to elders and lords, these are [made by] placing the verb before the adverb, *cica*, the principal meaning of this *cica* is, as or therefore. The reason for why they pre-place these verbs in this speech as such, I have not been able to understand, only heard in speech".⁷² Córdova followed this brief description by providing some phrases and how these were used, "...When they speak to a lord, *pezaacicalachinaa*, 'my lord, have mercy on me.' To tell an elder to eat they say, *cotago cicachana*. To tell them to wait, your majesty, lord or excellency, *coteecica yobinachana*".⁷³ Córdova's description of this term explains the frequent use of *cica* in archival texts. To some extent, the regular presence of this term is in line with the context in which the documents were produced, by native lords, for either dying elders or other elites.

⁷² Córdova, Arte, 55.

⁷³ Córdova, Arte, 55.

sar. Tambien diremos, tonicatitia. &c. Todos los demas van por aqui. &c. Puedense tambien estos hazer, duplicando o reitirando el verbo.

VERBOS REVERENCIALES.

¶ AY en esta lengua tambien vna manera de verbos que los podemos llamar reuerenciales, los quales vsan frequentemente los yndios para hablar con los mayores y señores, estos son postponiendo al verbo este ad verbio, cica, el principal significado deste sica, es como, o assi. La causa porque le postponen estos verbos en estas hablas assi, yo no la he podido alcançar mas que oyrlo hablar. Dizen pues quando hablan con vn señor, pezaacicalachinaa, haz señor misericordia conmigo. Para dezir a vn mayor que coma dizen, cotago cicachana. Para dezirle espere. V. md. señoria, o excellencia, coteecica yobinachana. No ay mas que tratar deste, cica a quien en este lugar, vide adelante los capitulos.

Figure 1.5. Published in 1578. Page 55 from Córdoba's *Arte* that describes the reverential speech used by commoners when speaking to elders or high-ranking lords.

As leaders of indigenous local government, caciques made up the small circle from which local governors were elected by their peers. The sources reflect interesting characteristics of leadership; in terms of writing, indigenous nobles were often capable of signing their own names. Perhaps owing to their positions as leaders and producers of documentation on behalf of their community, the upper circles of indigenous leaders learned to sign their own names, which they used as stamps of approval or verification, even when they did not speak Spanish. Such was

the case of don Domingo de Mendoza, a cacique and gobernador of Tlacolula for over sixteen years. In 1576 he signed a petition to have a Zapotec-speaking interpreter intervene in the recording of his testimony which was be presented to the Audiencia in Mexico City. He expressly called for a Zapotec interpreter because he confessed that he did not speak Spanish. The petition was written in Spanish by a court official, and it was carefully signed by the Zapotec cacique with the same type of flourish found in Spanish signatures.⁷⁴

Conclusion

The earliest Zapotec writings preserve histories of political events and wars on stones that were displayed prominently in public spaces. The stone registers changed over time with the stories, depending on who was telling them. Zapotecs attended to both regional events and the achievements of local rulers. The writing highlighted Zapotec social connections with neighboring kingdoms. Some of the most successful elites paid homage to their predecessors with stone monuments placed on their burial sites. At some point in the Postclassic period, Zapotec elites commemorated their weddings in stone registers that depict the beginning of guelaguetza networks. These writings always complemented a strong oral tradition, which served as the core of indigenous historical memory. The introduction of alphabetic text during the colonial period allows us to see various aspects of Zapotec society in the Central Valley, several generations after the lienzos and stelae of ancient times.

⁷⁴ AGN Civil, Expediente 822, foja 60r.

CHAPTER TWO

Zapotec Community and Society

Casamientos fortear antiguamente el sortílego para ver si eran para en uno. *Tochillaya, tochàga xipiàa, xinayàa, tocòpiàaya, tiñabaya, tiñapaya.&c.*

Fiesta de siete dias. *Lànij quiàcheguèi.*

Bifpera de fiefta o vigilia della. *Cìca quixèe lànij.*

Fiesta que hazia el hijo en comemoracion de sus padres y de sus hechos y proezas. *Chàba, tija.*

Entries in Córdoba's *Vocabulario* for marriages and *fiesta*.¹

This chapter examines the Zapotec community or *queche* in the colonial period, focusing on local indigenous government and social relations within the community. Despite many Spanish introductions and profound colonial changes, the indigenous foundations of Postclassic Zapotec society remained intact.² The Postclassic period, itself, had been a period of great transformation. The decline of Monte Alban forced hereditary dynasties in the Valley of Oaxaca to seek new strategies to legitimize their local and regional authority.³ I argue that the guelaguetza system in this period enabled all *queche* members to participate in the lifeways of

¹ Fray Juan de [C]órdoba, *Vocabulario en lengua çapoteca* (Mexico: Impreso por Pedro Charre y Antonio Ricardo, 1578): 74r: “Casamientos fortear antiguamente el sortílego para ver si eran para en uno. Tochillaya, tochàga xipiàa, xinayàa, tocòpiàaya, tiñabaya, tiñapaya.&c.”; and C55v: “Bifpera de fiefta o vigilia della. Cìca quixèe lànij”; and C196r: “Fiesta de siete dias. Lànij quiàcheguèi”; and C196r: “Fiesta que hazia el hijo en comemoracion de sus padres y de sus hechos y proezas. Chàba, tija.”

² On the Nahua, Haskett wrote: “The power and authority of the jurisdiction’s traditional ruling elite was thus preserved rather than removed by the establishment of the cabildo system”. Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers*, 5.

³ Jeffrey Blomster summarized these changes: “...elites devised new leadership strategies, the vast majority of the population’s lifestyle endured, with continuities marking aspects of quotidian and religious life and cosmology. Commoners also played a role in the negotiations of social practice that precluded any other large centralized states comparable to Monte Alban from developing and continued a way of life still in place upon the arrival of the Spanish and beyond”. Jeffrey P. Blomster, *After Monte Albán: Transformation and Negotiation in Oaxaca, Mexico* (Boulder, Colo.: University Press of Colorado, 2008), xii.

these many communities. The Zapotec *queche*, similar to corporate communities in other Mesoamerican societies, including the Mixtec *ñuu*, the Nahuatl *altepetl*, and the Maya *cah*, benefitted from the mutual support system of *guelaguetza* networks.⁴

From Pre-Columbian Elites to Colonial Administrators

The indigenous *cabildos* listed in Córdoba as *yòholàhuilàtètàcahuexija*⁵ consisted of two kinds of officials, the *bexuana* and the *coqui*. They were a select group of men, chosen by a larger, select body of electors including nobles and elders. The *bexuana* and *coqui* continued to hold important positions in their communities on the *cabildo*, the Spanish-style municipal council system that allowed indigenous communities a measure of self-government in the colonial system.⁶ The hereditary elite governed the *peniqueche* and *penichiña*, commoners and day laborers, respectively.⁷ All were considered *penihualache*, indigenous people who belonged to a particular community. Spanish translations of Zapotec documents refer to the *bexuana* and the *coqui* as *principales*, highlighting their high-ranking social position. According to Dominican Juan de Córdoba there were four separate *linajes*, lineages or classes in Zapotec society: *coqui*, high-ranking lords; *tiajoana*, whom the friar compared to Spanish *caballeros*;

⁴ The Zapotec were active participants in a larger Mesoamerican political system since pre-Columbian times, which is why we find so many common threads with other important societies. Caso wrote, “Las culturas de los pueblos de Oaxaca, mixtecas y zapotecas, tienen un íntimo contacto con las otras culturas de México y Centroamérica, por lo que encontramos muchos elementos comunes entre mayas, teotihuacanos, mixtecas, zapotecas, totonacas, etcétera”. Translated from Alfonso Caso, *Homenaje a Alfonso Caso: obras escogidas*. (México, D.F.: Patronato para el Fomento de Actividades Culturales y de Asistencia Social a las Comunidades Indígenas, 1996), 48.

⁵ Literal translation of this word is “house where hearings are held.” hue-xiia
nom-hold.hearing

⁶ For a study of the indigenous *cabildo* functions and development in the Nahuatl region, see Charles Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*. (Oxford U.P., 1952).

⁷ C280r: “Natural de mi patria. Vide hombre y compatriota. Pèni zàa làchea pèni hualaachea. Natural de un pueblo. vt. feuillano. Pèni hualàche con lo de donde es ò dezir. Pèni feuilla, natural de feuilla.”

tiajoanahuini or *tiacollaba*, whom he compared to Spanish *hidalgos*; and finally, those who made up the majority of the population, *tiapèniqueche*, the workers.⁸ There was also a class called the *tiacicanícalayna*, people who had ascended the social scale in their own lifetimes. The potential for social mobility has been documented for other Mesoamerican regions, such as for the Nahuatl and the Maya.

Spaniards introduced the cabildo system in many of the more prominent Zapotec *queche*, communities that the Spaniards called *pueblos*. The cabildo system facilitated colonial administrative needs and transformed aspects of the *queche*'s governance. In pre-Columbian times, government was led by hereditary indigenous lords who were born into elite households. Zapotec-language documents reveal some pre-Columbian narratives in the colonial records. In 1614, a man from the *queche* of Teitipac wrote, "I [am] Sebastián López, who is native of the pueblo of San Sebastián; I am a member of the barrio of the palace of Cristóbal Ramírez", [*nacaya beni hualachi quechi s. Sebastián nagabaya bario quehui xpobal Ramirez*].⁹ The document reveals that Sebastián López paid tribute to Cristóbal Ramírez (presumably a Zapotec lord), referring to a particular unit within the *queche* as the "barrio of Cristóbal Ramírez's palace," as if the unit were based on the royal palace.

The Zapotec *queche* was divided into subunits called *barrios* by Spaniards, a name that Zapotecs eventually adopted for the sub-units that were similar, perhaps, to the *calpulli* or *tlaxilacalli* of the Nahuatl *altepetl* in central Mexico or the *siqui* and *siña* of the Mixtec *ñuu* in

⁸ C246r: "Linaje de señores grandes. Tijacoquij. l. coquí." Followed by C246r: "Linaje de señores mas baxos como caualleros. Tiajoàna"; and C246r: "Linaje mas baxo como de hidalgos. Tijajoánahuíni, tijacol làba." And C246r: "Linaje de populares o labradores. Tijapèniqueche" those who could climb the social ladder and were known as C246r: "Linaje que a poco y de nonada subio. Tijacicanícalayña, es methaphora."

⁹ AGN T 256: 2 f. 104-104v. Zapotexts reference Te614.

the Mixteca Alta and the Valley of Oaxaca.¹⁰ Each *queche* consisted of multiple *barrios*. High-ranking lords in the *barrios* performed many types of daily functions as officials and reported to the larger body of men on the *cabildo*. They governed the *peniqueche*.¹¹ Córdova provides some interesting insights into the functions of the Zapotec *barrio* in his entries for this word: "Barrio de villa o lugar. *Tòbi lào quèche, tobi quiña queche, chacuè quèche*."¹² The escribanos were very careful to document the names of *barrios* for Cetoba (the Zapotec name for Teitipac), including Quehui¹³, Quiagueza¹⁴, Quiego¹⁵ and Quiazee¹⁶. *Barrios* served as organizing units for households throughout the colonial period. In 1753, a Zapotec man named Nicolás Blas, from the *queche* of San Antonino in the Ocotlán region, claimed that he belonged to the *barrio* called *Lubiobi*. In his Zapotec-language testament he declared, "I, the sick person, Nicolas Blas, I belong to the Lubiobi *barrio*" [*na benegi chi nicolas blas nagabaya lau bario Lubiobi geche San Antonino*].¹⁷ *Barrios* were central to the organization and governance of the Zapotec *queche*.

¹⁰ For a description and examples of *calpulli* and *tlaxilacalli* see Lockhart, *The Nahuas After the Conquest*, 16-18, and for the *siqui* and *siña* see Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 105-112.

¹¹ James Lockhart provides a description of some characteristics of the Nahuatl subsystem of the *altepetl* called *calpolli*: "Each had a distinctive name remaining the same over long periods of time, most often referring to geographical features or ethnic affiliation. Each had its own leader (called by some *teuctlatoani*) with a distinctive title or *teuctocaitl* ("lordly name"); whether or not such leaders were dynastic, even after the groups were settled, is not yet established, but in well-developed situations they very likely were. And each held a portion of the *altepetl* territory, exclusively for the use of its members... As equal and separate entities, the *calpolli* would contribute separately and more or less equally to common obligations of the *altepetl*; each would separately deliver its part of a general levy in maize or other products to the designated common place of collection; in time of war, each contributed a fighting unit under its own leadership. For ongoing *altepetl* duties, however, involving either draft labor or the delivery of products throughout the year, a scheme of rotation was necessary. The fixed rotation of the *calpolli* was the life thread of the *altepetl*...", Lockhart, *The Nahuas After the Conquest*, 16-17.

¹² C52r: "Barrio de villa o lugar."

¹³ Zapotexts reference Te616.

¹⁴ Zapotexts reference Te610.

¹⁵ Zapotexts reference Te593.

¹⁶ Zapotexts reference Te702.

¹⁷ Zapotexts reference Oc753.

Zapotec hereditary elites led local indigenous government, as in other regions of Mesoamerica.¹⁸ Coqui ruled individual queche before the conquest and continued to play prominent roles on the Spanish style cabildo of their queche, with new titles that represented their continued importance in colonial society.¹⁹ Haskett notes that a royal decree ordered the standardization of indigenous hereditary titles through “[a] *cédula* issued on February 26, 1538, [which] ordered that altepetl rulers could no longer be called *señores naturales* (a right of the king alone) and instead were to be called either *gobernadores* or *principales* (nobles).”²⁰ These lords contributed to their communities in several capacities: they presided over rituals, served as political leaders or judges, and they had the power and perhaps duty of executing corporal punishment, as described by Córdova, who wrote that the lords used a special paddle for castigation “in ancient times” called *yàgalipàana*.²¹

If male lords continued to lead their communities as governors of their cabildos, women were excluded. The Spanish cabildo favored men as officers in local government. While noblewomen undoubtedly continued to participate in the governance of their queches, Spanish officials recognized only men as rerepresentatives of local communities. Spanish patriarchal

¹⁸ Robert Haskett describes a similar situation for the Nahua region, “The well known laxity and selectivity of Spanish legal enforcement allowed for sub-imperial indigenous town governments to be led by members of the traditional elite utilizing many prehispanic ruling practices with little opposition. This state of affairs was fundamental to the evolution of Indian governmental structures as the colonial era progressed”. Robert Stephen Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers: An Ethnohistory of Town Government in Colonial Cuernavaca*, 1st ed (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), 4.

¹⁹ C349r: “Rey. Todos los nombres facando el primero fon nombres del oficio de rey. Coqui Rey, connijtào, cobèepèatào, coquichepèatào, huetòcotichapèatào, cocòopèatào”; C349r: “Reyna. Coquixonàxilechèla rey.”

²⁰ As quoted in Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers*, 21.

²¹ C298v: “Palo con que los feñores caftigauan antiguamente que era cofa particular. Yàgaquique, yàgapèlòhue, yàgalò, yàgalipàana.” The last word in this entry “yàgalipàana” is used for the wooden staff employed in ritual speeches spoken in modern-day Isthmus Zapotec, as documented by Victor Cata, *Libana* (Oaxaca, México: Fondo Yoo Guchi, 2012).

mores marginalized noblewomen in the colonial period. This was one of many major changes that transformed coqui and coqui xonaxi rule after the conquest.

The Cabildo and its Leaders

The cabildo was a governing body composed of one *gobernador*, two *alcaldes*, four *alguaciles*, four *regidores* and a number of *topiles*. The *escribano* or notary created a formal record of the cabildo's activities, as the council dispensed with all types of community affairs. Each member of the cabildo was expected to interact regularly with the peniqueche. The officers became intimately involved in matters of personal property, inheritance, family quarrels, and disputes between neighbors.²² This interaction extended outside the queche as the cabildo officers dealt with Spaniards, whether ecclesiastics, *encomenderos*, colonial officials, or others. For example, the indigenous cabildos were in charge of collecting tribute, according to the number of households in each barrio, and forwarding monies or goods associated with this taxation to the local Spanish *alcalde mayor*, who communicated directly with indigenous leaders. Moreover, members of the cabildo were expected to set an example as Christians, and were more likely to learned Spanish and the formulaic language of colonial discourse. They were responsible for representing their communities to outsiders.

The *gobernador* or governor was the highest-ranking member of the cabildo, chosen annually by electors from an elite pool of lords, the coqui and xoana, and other eligible elders.²³ The hereditary elite's influence continued to be valued by both members of the queche and colonial officials, who relied on these intermediary lords for everything that they hoped to achieve, from conversion to Catholicism to the collection of taxation and organization of labor.

²² C252r: "Macehuatl, ò vezino del pueblo ò popular. Pèniquèche."

²³ Sometimes referred to as *pichana* or *bexuana*.

As was the case throughout Mesoamerica, Spaniards were quick to locate and name a *cacique*, hereditary lord, who was a prime candidate for cabildo governor. As Lockhart observed, "...it was after 1535, in the time of Viceroy don Antonio de Mendoza, that Spanish officials systematically began naming the ranking *tlatoque* of important altepetl to formal governorships of their respective units, so that in Spanish the head of an Indian town was often called, "cacique y gobernador" or "senor y gobernador."²⁴ The Zapotec saw in the *gobernador* a ruler with a legitimate right to rule based on hereditary birthright, and either elected the same person governor every year or, if necessary, rotated the office among the two or three of the highest-ranking male lords of a community, as in other regions of Mesoamerica.²⁵

Below the *gobernadores* were the *alcaldes*, secondary members of the indigenous council who might have served as advisors to their governor.²⁶ They belonged to elite families and were eligible for cabildo positions. There were two types of *alcaldes*: the first received direct assignments from their *cacique y gobernador*, and the *alcalde ordinario* addressed queche business with the assistance of lower-ranking office holders. Córdova's entries in his dictionary signal some of the governing duties of those who held these offices; for example, the *alcaldes* could serve as justices, or they could be in charge of the jail.²⁷

²⁴ Lockhart, *The Nahuas After the Conquest*, 31.

²⁵ For a comparative example from the Nahuatl region see Charles Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1952) and Robert Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers: An Ethnohistory of Town Government in Colonial Cuernavaca* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991).

²⁶ Regarding the roles of officers on Nahua cabildos, Lockhart observed for the *alcaldes*: "As people of noble rank accustomed to adjudicate and administer, they offer close parallels to Spanish municipal functionaries, but some striking differences may also be observed. Although the Nahua officials were generally representatives of lineages and in that somewhat comparable to Spanish functionaries, they above all represented geographically and jurisdictionally separate subunits of the whole, a principle alien to the Spanish system." Lockhart, *The Nahuas After the Conquest*, 36.

²⁷ C20: "Alcayde de carcel. Còpalichiquijba." Also C227r: "Jufticia real el que es jufticia como alcalde o afsi. Pèni noçòo rey."

Not all cabildo positions were reserved for hereditary elites, however.²⁸ The constables in the cabildo, called *alguaciles* in Spanish or *quixiàga* in Zapotec, were “minor offices” open to high-ranking commoners.²⁹ Although they might be considered low-ranking elites, they played an important role in the governance of the cabildo.³⁰ They were followed by the *regidores*, who were equally important. Together, these officials had the duty of managing the daily affairs of the queche. The alguaciles and regidores helped the peniqueche in many ways, acting in the capacity of judges and political advisors along to the governor.

While it is difficult to gauge the degree to which any given cabildo member was literate, (beyond whether or not he signed a document) or the type of education he received, it is likely that all cabildo members were trained to some degree in the Mesoamerican tradition of public speaking, and in the basic business of the colonial system. In a section of his *Arte* describing “reverential verbs,” Córdova observed that the peniqueche spoke with reverence or respect to the coqui and bexuana. The Dominican described a type of high Zapotec register that people used to address lords or nobles.³¹ No indigenous cabildo could function without an *escribano*, who was not only a scribe, but also a notary.³² The escribano was perhaps the most important member of the cabildo after the governor. The notary was, after all, responsible for writing the daily business of the council and ensuring that documents were drafted accurately and carefully,

²⁸ Similar cabildo duties are described in Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers*; Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest*; and Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*.

²⁹ Lockhart calls the alguaciles, “minor officials” and describes them: “The Spanish system emphasized a sharp distinction between noble, prestigious full cabildo members and shifting, unprestigious, plebeian sub-cabildo officials like constables and attendants. Rarely if ever could a person in the second category rise to the first.” Lockhart, *Nahuas After the Conquest*, 41-42.

³⁰ C21v: “Alguazil. Quixiàga.”

³¹ See “Verbos Reverenciales” in Córdova, *Arte del idioma zapoteco*, 55.

³² Lockhart observed: “The notary was not a voting member of the cabildo, but he was not exactly a lower official either.” Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest*, 40.

providing formulaic assurances that the truth had been told and that the composition of the document had been witnessed by several reliable people.

Lazaro Jiménez, the Zapotec escribano of Zimatlán, who drafted a document in 1565 that legitimated the property rights of Alonso Caballero, is currently the oldest known escribano in the "Zapotexts" collection of Zapotec-language documents written during the colonial period.³³ Alonso Caballero was a Zapotec man whose ancestors had worked some land for at least two generations. Alonso was awarded the right to set up an *estancia* (cultivated or pastured land) and to begin using the land, which had been neglected and which some local Spaniards saw as an opportunity for purchase.³⁴ However, the local cabildo convened and warned, "We say this, the governor, alcaldes, and regidores, all of us: we give vacant land, land that cannot be cultivated, land that is not estancia (cultivated or pastured) land, land that no person cultivates, because some other Spaniard wants to take the land..." [*tini-tono gobernador alcaldes la regidores la quita tononitij tenechia laa tonon yoo natachi yoo aca quinaa yoo aca estancia yoo aca tana peni quelanij çechacue peni castilla*].³⁵ The message was explicit: the cabildo sought to keep Spaniards from encroaching on community lands by creating a legal document, and by that confirming that the land had belonged to Alonso Caballero's ancestors. Thus the cabildo provided this statement of its collective will that, with the support of additional documents, a *provision* (legal document of entitlement) and a *título*, Alonso take control of the property and would help the community keep Spaniards from possessing local lands.

³³ AGN-Tierras 241:7.

³⁴ For a full analysis of the document see Restall, Matthew, Lisa Sousa & Kevin Terraciano (eds.), *Mesoamerican Voices: Native-Language Writings from Colonial Mexico, Oaxaca, Yucatan, and Guatemala* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 103-104. See also Michel R. Oudijk, "El texto más antiguo en zapoteca," *Tlalocan* 15, (México, D.F.: UNAM 2008), 227-40.

³⁵ "I the escribano, heard all these words; thus this decree was spoken in the seat of the audiencia. Thus I have placed my signature on this paper. Lázaro Jiménez, writer (escribano)," as quoted in Restall, Sousa, and Terraciano, *Mesoamerican Voices*, 104.

The cabildo also counted on the services of *topiles*, a community police force that patrolled the *queche* and scolded wrongdoers or jailed them, if necessary. Zapotecs called the jail *lichiyàga* and the jailer was called *penicòpalìchiquiba*.³⁶ Public corporal punishment was another form of castigation. People were tied to a wooden post in the plaza and lashed with a whip from a few to as many as 200 times, depending on the severity of the crime. The post, known as a *picota* in Spanish, was called *yàgaticàanilòoqueya* in Zapotec.³⁷ In 1642, when a Zapotec man named Gabriel de Santa Ana made a peaceful legal agreement with Marcos Antonio, his son-in-law, in the *queche* of Tiltepec, the document specified a penalty for those who attempted to interfere with the agreement.³⁸ Specifically, the document threatened intruders with three dozen lashes, three months in jail, and a fifty peso fine [lani quichi *escritura* tipela quita quelani *pena* xiteneni 50 ps cama xiteni xi coquij ttoona dios reys chela chona peo lichi quiba chela chona tezena *azote* lao *picota*].³⁹ Topiles were likely lower-ranking elites or high-ranking commoners whose service to the community consisted primarily of their ability to carry out cabildo decisions.

Corporal punishment, public shaming, and social rejection were common forms of punishment. When the Zapotec *audiencia* sentenced someone to corporal punishment, the cabildo officials were responsible for administering justice; *alcaldes* and *topiles* apprehended individuals and oversaw the punishment. On January 17, 1700, Melchor Antonio of the *queche* of Tiltepec threatened potential offenders with twenty pesos, one month in jail and three dozen lashes on the *picota* [*mirchore antonio ripaquia pena totini quinini tichariini quixeni 20 p^os*

³⁶ C72v: “Carcel. Lìchiyàga, lichiquibatìyòopenihuexìhui, lichitoo and C72v: Carcelero. penicòpalìchiquiba, nacàa, càalichiquiba.”

³⁷ C198v: “Palo para açotar en la plaça, vide picota. Yàgaticàanilòoqueya.”

³⁸ Zapotexts Reference Ti642.

³⁹ Zapotexts Reference Ti642.

huanee to bibeo Lichiguiba huanee 3 tozena Azoti Loo picota].⁴⁰ This tradition of public punishment continued into the eighteenth century. In a document from 1711 the queche of San Andres Tiltepec set a cost of fifteen pesos, one month in jail, and fifty lashes for anyone who challenged a legal sales agreement [*Annaa rijllaaquij toño pena la ni quichi excriptorra rii ni to ti lani quii tta quela ni ticha bea xite ne toño – qui xeni – 15 p^o s huanie to bi beo lij quichi q uii baa huanie tuapi chii Azotes loo picotas es ti cha pea toño Justicia*].⁴¹ Public shaming was a high cost to pay in a close-knit Zapotec community.

The Secular-Sacred Hierarchy

The Spaniards put an end to the construction of monumental architecture in the Zapotec style, beginning with the most prominent sites of public worship, the temples. Talented Zapotec architects called *copeechequelacolanéchi* designed and oversaw the construction of many important sites in the Postclassic period.⁴² The palace-temple structure at Mitla, for example, was an active Zapotec center of politics and religious activity.⁴³ The palace in Cetoba (Teitipac) was another important political and religious center that the Spaniards attempted to dismantle. Cetoba was known as a place where the coqui were sent for burial.⁴⁴ The well-known funeral

⁴⁰ Zapotexts Reference Ti700.

⁴¹ Zapotexts Reference Ti711b.

⁴² C20v: “Albañir de cafas. Copeechequelacolanéchi, copeechehuechibapecò. And Albañeria. Quelacolanéchi.l.quelacolanéche.”

⁴³ Bernd Fahmel. “Cuatro siglos de interpretacion de la arquitectura monumental prehispánica del Valle de Oaxaca: 1580-1984”, in *Cuaderno de Arquitectura Mesoamericana*, (Facultad de Arquitectura Mesoamericana, UNAM 1986) Volumen 7, 9-16.

⁴⁴ Burgoa wrote: “Este pueblo de San Juan Teticpaque, que en su lengua zapoteca se llama Zeetoba, que quiere decir otro sepulcro, o lugar de entierros a distinción del entierro general que tenían los reyes zapotecos en el pueblo de Mitla, que se llama Yooba de cuya grandeza se dirá después con las magníficas circunstancias que lo

ceremonies for the Zapotec lords were overseen by religious specialists that continued practicing Mesoamerican spiritual celebrations secretly after colonization.⁴⁵ Whereas some Zapotec palaces were preserved after the conquest, most destroyed temples became the sites of new churches, often providing the stones for the new building, as in the case of Mitla.

Spaniards sought to destroy Zapotec religion when they demolished the temples. The Zapotecs venerated a pantheon of gods in the tradition of Mesoamerican religious cosmology. As in other parts of Mesoamerica, the roles and relationships of governing lords and religious specialists were intertwined.⁴⁶ The timing and extent of religious conversion is difficult to measure for this period. Archival records suggest that the process of conversion was profound, but the records can only reveal part of the story. In any case, many records suggest that Zapotecs understood Christian concepts in their own words and on their own terms. For example, in 1683 an escribano attributed the following words to Juan Martin of Tiltepec: “I have come to believe the four sacred prayers of the noble woman St. Mary” [*coye lilachij tabazo laya nayona xiteni coqui xonasetoo Sanda Maria*].⁴⁷ In this phrase, the Virgin Mary is described with the *coqui xonaxi* term used to designate Zapotec noblewomen. In Oaxaca, as in other colonial centers, “Spanish ecclesiastical accounts emphasize the speed, thoroughness, and voluntary nature of the

engrandecen, pudiendo a toda la soberbia de la gentilidad dejar envidiosa de lo que esta Zapoteca ostentó en la fúnebre pompa de sus defuntos señores, ya se ha dicho en otra parte, del universal error, que el enemigo general del hombre persuadió a todos los indios acerca de la resurrección postiza de sus cuerpos, luego después de muertos, encaminándolos a otros sitios amenos...” Fray Francisco de Burgoa, *Geográfica Descripción*, (México DF: Editorial Porrúa 1989), 64.

⁴⁵ In Chapter 4 we will see that Don Domingo de Mendoza the cacique y gobernador of Tlacolula was thrown in jail as a result of idolatries.

⁴⁶ Lockhart documented the roles of indigenous leaders: “...the upper level of the priestly hierarchy was recruited from the same noble lineages as the political officers of the *altepetl*; the same person might hold religious and political posts, in succession, and *altepetl* officials as such had important religious duties”. James Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest*, 204.

⁴⁷ Zapotexts Reference Ti683b.

changeover...”⁴⁸ We wonder, however, whether Zapotecs secretly guarded forms of Mesoamerican spirituality while abandoning the most conspicuous expressions of ancient Mesoamerican religious worship.

Perhaps the most universal aspect of Zapotec religious practice was the feasting tradition, which remained at the center of all rituals, Mesoamerican or Christian.⁴⁹ By organizing large feasts, Zapotecs brought many social groups together to exchange food, drink, customs, and ideas. Fray Juan de Córdova’s *vocabulario* dedicates much attention to the various types of Zapotec feasts, many organized in honor of agricultural cycles, family members, life cycles, or supernatural beings. The feasts clearly made an impression on Córdova, who included over forty-five separate entries for various types of feasts, food and eating. According to Córdova, the supreme Zapotec deity was *Piyétào*, but they also worshipped images of the deities made of stone (*pitàoque*) and carved from wood (*pitàoyaga*), representations known in general as *pitàoxihui*.⁵⁰ Four principal signs which Córdova called "planets" divided the two hundred and sixty day ritual Zapotec calendar, when lords hosted religious feasts called *quetapitòla*, when they consumed fowl, fish and game such as rabbit.⁵¹ The *xicòni pitòo* referred to the precious food that was considered fit for the gods, including ritual breads called *quétaàlce* and a Zapotec candy that consisted of roasted maguey called *quíetóbayèe*.⁵² The guests danced and exchanged

⁴⁸ See Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers*, 21.

⁴⁹ For an exceptional collection of studies on the topic of feasting see Michael Dietler, *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (Tuscaloosa, Ala: University of Alabama Press, 2010). In particular, chapter 13 by Linda Brown, titled “Feasting on the Periphery” is especially relevant as an example of Mesoamerican feasting.

⁵⁰ See the many entries for pre-Columbian deities in C141r: “Dioses.”

⁵¹ See Córdova, *Arte del idioma zapoteco*, 201.

⁵² C207r: “Mexcal maguey affado la cabeça o tronco. Quíetóbayèe, quíquetóbayèe.” This is a food that can be found in today’s Oaxacan markets.

gifts called *tòhuixicuèchia*, *tonìche xicuèchea*.⁵³ The dances included ritual objects, such as a human skull filled with dried grasses, and musical instruments made out of human bones, called *quegoxilla*.⁵⁴

Zapotec religious specialists organized feasts according to ritual rotations of sixty-five days. A *colanij* attended the celebration as the presiding ritual specialist. These sacred banquets were squashed by priests, who prohibited *coqui* and *coquixonaxi* from continuing such celebrations. The lords had many reasons to hide non-Catholic rituals from Spaniards or abandon them entirely, for the open continuance of such practices would jeopardize their lives and their family fortunes.⁵⁵ Lords who wished to preserve their hereditary right to rule as *caciques* and *cacicas* in the colonial period had to play by new rules. Likewise, all *principales* on the Zapotec cabildo, the *coqui* and the lower-ranking *xoana* who represented the *queche* to Spanish officials needed to guard their behavior when it came to practices that were considered contrary to Christianity if they wanted to retain their privileged status in colonial times. These were the people who had received special treatment in pre-conquest times, both in life and in death. In pre-conquest times, people went as far as to try to prevent or retard the decomposition of the

⁵³ C257v: “Manjares del demonio ò comidas, que comían por sacrificios y fieftas antiguamente los indios. Làce, pitòbi, tigàlò, quecòaca, queta quina, quetapitola, penitonil làna. Còbayàa”; and C58v: “Bollos que hazian antiguamente para comer en las fieftas del demonio. Quétàlace, láace.l.quétapitòla”; and C112v: “Dar dones o prefentes, los que dauan antiguamente en los banquetes a feñores. Tòhuixicuèchia, tonìche xicuèchea”; and C257v: “Manjar de los diofes ò muypreciado. Xicòni pitòo, xicòni pàa, çàa, tàgopàa tète.”

⁵⁴ C72r: “Cara y cabeça de hombre deffollada y llena de paja que trayan en los bayles antiguamente. Petéhue, petéhui, petíhui, pitíhui.”

⁵⁵ As Taylor points out, “[n]ative caciques who embraced the faith were recognized by the Crown as legitimate local leaders with legitimate property rights... The nobles understood the importance of asserting their claims [to land]; indeed the royal grants were a response to petitions that they initiated. In this way many nobles secured clear title to Valley lands at an early date, before the Europeans became interested in land ownership”. William B. Taylor, *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca*, 39-40.

deceased lords' bodies, applying a special worm paste to embalm the bodies, as described by Córdova: "...[they] embalmed the bodies of the dead lords so that they would not decompose."⁵⁶

The Cofradía

The lay confraternity offered indigenous men and women the opportunity to participate actively in the spiritual life of the community, as it came to be radically redefined after the conquest. *Cofradías* were led by married couples and elders from the various barrios in each queche. Leadership of the *cofradías* and *cabildos* was determined differently. Although queche elites played prominent roles in both institutions, *cofradías* were more inclusive and perhaps more egalitarian in selecting its leaders. For example, people who were not born into elite circles had opportunities to lead *cofradías* if they rose to a higher social rank through either *tequios* or *cargos* as part of their *guelaguetza* responsibilities. For example, in 1786, a dispute resulted in litigation between the *común y naturales* of the queche of San Juan Guelavía and two men, José Mariano Garcia and Agustín Hernández, who complained that the *cantor* and *topil* positions to which their respective sons had been elected was too low for someone of their social position, claiming their families were *principales*. At least one of these positions, the *cantor*, was an office of the *cofradia*. A spokesperson for the queche, a Licenciado named José Gabriel, provided reasons for the election and a clear description of how the offices were chosen:

Que ni este [José Mariano] ni el otro Agustín son principales por origen y la costumbre del pueblo ha sido que los que no son de esta clase primera los de segunda que son los que por sus oficios adquieren la distinción de principalidad no serán exculpados [sic] porque otros comienzan desde este oficio...⁵⁷

⁵⁶ C211r: "Gufanitos con que vntauan los cuerpos de los feñores muertos para que no fe pudriefen." But Córdova did not include the Zapotec word for this entry, only the Spanish description.

⁵⁷ Archivo Historico de Tlacolula, Justicia 1786, Expediente 7, foja 1r-1v.

That neither this nor the other Agustín are principales by origin; the custom of this pueblo has been that those who are not from this first class, those who have acquired their distinction of principal through their occupations, will not be excused because others begin from this position...

The licenciado's reasons were clear: the families were not born into this class, but rather, had acquired their privileged position as a result of their occupations (oficios). However, José Mariano Garcia did not want his son to serve in the office of cantor in the church because he claimed that the positions was already adequately filled by four or six individuals, and that they did not need extra people in their group. The Licenciado replied to José with stern words about the duties of community members:

si ese fuse motivo muchos lo irán tomando para excusarse [sic] de dar al pueblo estas contribuciones o por exceptuarse [sic] de los tequios y demás servicios a que todos los mas obligados a presentar.⁵⁸

And if that were the reason, many [people] will seek to be excused from contributing to the pueblo or to exclude themselves from the tequios and other services which everyone is obligated to give.

By 1550, Dominican friars actively pursued the construction of convents and churches in the Central Valley and by the end of the sixteenth century they had established *doctrinas* in the Zapotec communities of Zaachila, Santa Catarina Minas, Santa Marta Chichicapan, San Miguel Tlaxitac, San Gerónimo Tlacoahuaya, San Juan Teitipac, Teotitlán del Valle and Tlacolula.⁵⁹ These institutions were promoted by the religious orders throughout New Spain in the tradition of the early modern European sodalities. The *cofradías* were dedicated to saints, and sometimes they were named after Catholic concepts such as the “Holy Cross”, “The Holy Sepulcher” or “The Immaculate Conception”. The confraternities appear in the Oaxacan historical record from

⁵⁸ Archivo Historico de Tlacolula, Justicia 1786, Expediente 7, foja 1v.

⁵⁹ Taylor, *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca*, 165.

the early sixteenth century on and are prevalent throughout the colonial period. Zapotecs organized *queche* activities sponsored by the Church through their *cofradías*.

Both before and after the conquest, *queche* leaders organized ritual religious celebrations. Under Dominican instruction, the *coqui* and *beniqueche* were required to organize festivities according to the Catholic calendar. The small number of Spanish settlers and priests, compared to the large Zapotec population, meant that indigenous people had ample opportunities to infuse their own Christian celebrations with local traditions. Indigenous lay sodalities were responsible for procuring funds in order to sponsor pious and charitable acts, such as organizing patron saint feasts or providing proper burials for the poor. Many of these social acts were normally organized through *guelaguetza* exchanges, and did not require *cofradía* leaders.

As the dominant religious order in Oaxaca, the Dominicans profited from funds raised by Zapotec *cofradías*, especially in terms of property acquisition. Taylor noted that, “Dominican parish churches and monasteries received nearly all their landholdings through *capellanias* and gifts from Indian nobles and communities.”⁶⁰ These activities initiated native participation in the money economy. Ranching served as one way for indigenous people to raise money for the *cofradías*, through the sale of animals and products such as cheese or wool.⁶¹ *Cofradías* raised funds for the purchase of myriad religious items, from bells and organs to candles and vestments. As Zapotecs participated in church activities, they learned a wide range of new skills and practices and were required to pay for the upkeep of the church and the sustenance of the friars.

The Zapotec *cabildo* and *cofradía* governed the *queche* collectively but separately. In some cases, the *cabildo* oversaw important *cofradía* proceedings, such as elections. For example,

⁶⁰ Ibid., 168.

⁶¹ For a discussion of *cofradías* and their property holding and cattle ranching in the Oaxacan Central Valleys see, Ibid., 171-172.

on June 19, 1669 the cabildo of Zaabeche, known to Spanish officials by its Náhuatl name of San Bartolomé Coyotepec, oversaw the election of *cofradía* leaders in the *queche*.⁶² The *cofradía* recorded the process: “The election of the brothers and *diputados* of the *cofradía* of holy San Bartolomé, [whose] high altar stands in the church of this pueblo, Zaabeche, will do the work [in] the current year...” [*Elecion xtenni hermano huane diputados xteeni cofradía xtenni, Sancto nayōna San Bartolome becogo roo nasoo lanni yootoo gueche Zaabeche rini ni coní china ysa anna ...*] The cabildo officials provided interpreters when Spanish officials arrived to supervise the proceedings. A Spanish maestro, fray Cristobal de Agüero, signed the formal recognition, which legitimated the confraternity’s elections of the “mayordomos y oficiales de la hermandad,” which was known as the “*cofradía del Altar Mayor de San Bartolome del pueblo de Zaabeche*.”

Spanish colonial officials allowed a degree of autonomy to the cabildos and the *cofradías*, as long as their activities did not interfere with royal rules of governance. Indigenous officers organized elections for leadership posts and collected dues on their own, and interacted with Spaniards only occasionally. At the same time, church officials oversaw *cofradía* activities throughout the colonial period, just as *alcaldes mayores* oversaw cabildo activities. In 1677, the Bishop of Antequera, fray Payo wrote about the elections in Coyotepec, when the ruling staffs were held in the *Alcalde Mayor*’s office for the newly elected Zapotec leaders. “Since there was no one to oversee said natives in their elections, nor to collect the royal tribute, the *Alcalde Mayor* decided to deposit the ruling staffs in the city of Antequera...” [*Como no había quién administrase a dichos naturales en sus elecciones ni cobrarles los Reales tributos, el Alcalde Mayor decidió depositar las varas en la ciudad de Antequera...*].⁶³ The document went on to instruct Andrés Pérez, the Zapotec governor of the community, and his *alcaldes*, Sebastián Luis

⁶² Coyotepec papers photographed and provided by Michel Oudjik. Zapotexts reference Co668.

⁶³ AGN, Indios Volumen 25, Expediente 235, Foja 175.

and Pasqual García, on how to secure the *varas* (staffs) from the colonial city. The newly elected Zapotec leaders signed their names to the document. It was now Andrés, Luis and Pasqual's duty to confirm their legitimate right to rule as dictated by the Spanish colonial officials, and to reclaim the staffs, symbols of authority, from Spanish officials in the city of Antequera.

The integrated leadership and collaboration required for the success of the indigenous cabildos and *cofradías* sheds light on the importance of the *guelaguetza* system for both institutions. All residents of the *queche* were obligated to participate in the *guelaguetza* system at the household, *barrio* and community levels for the benefit of the cabildos and *cofradías*, and for the greater good of the whole.

Hereditary and Earned Leadership Positions

Social status among the Zapotec was hierarchical, and the noble titles were inherited as in most other Mesoamerican societies. However, people in the non-elite group who showed dedicated service to their communities had access to a notable degree of mobility. *Guelaguetza* work such as *tequio* (from the Náhuatl 'tequitl' that means 'work') or *cargos* (year-long service to the community in an elected position) were instrumental in this form of upward social mobility. Córdova recognized this group of people in an entry as *tijacicanícalayña*, which he said was a term used as a metaphor for these types of individuals.⁶⁴ People who committed their lives to community service earned the respect of their peers and elevated their social status.

As members of the *queche*, regardless of their elite status, the *coqui* and *bexuana* were responsible for collaborating in *tequio* and engaging in *guelaguetza* on a regular basis. Those who continued to participate in traditional forms of organization were more likely to continue to earn the respect of the community. But colonial political restructuring and opportunities for

⁶⁴ C246r: "Linaje que apoco y de nonada fubio. Tijacicanícalayña."

individual elites in the money economy offered alternative forms of enrichment that departed from the collective customs of the past. In the eighteenth century, a number of legal cases within indigenous communities involved conflicts between cabildos and caciques over the issue of privileges and responsibilities.⁶⁵ It is not clear whether Zapotec caciques were exempt from tribute as in the Nahua regions, but they were definitely eligible for various royal privileges and favors; in return they were expected to show their loyalty to the crown by serving as intermediaries between their communities and Spanish officials.⁶⁶ The restructuring of indigenous government was a source of conflict between elites and their communities, especially when epidemics decimated the lineages of hereditary indigenous leaders who were most eligible to serve as *caciques y gobernadores*.

Colonial changes enabled lower-ranking indigenous men to assume leadership positions who were then rejected or questioned by others in the community. Such a complicated situation is exemplified by the case of don Gerónimo de Grijalva, who was described as *cacique* and *principal* of the pueblo of San Sebastián Tectipac, and who in 1709 battled members of his own community over the control of ancestral lands.⁶⁷ Five neighboring communities that bordered the disputed lands, including San Bartolomé Coyotepec, Santa Maria Coyotepec, San Sebastian Teitipac, San Juan Teitipac and Tlacoahuaya assisted the pueblo in protecting the disputed lands. The five autonomous communities were represented in wills and testaments that were used as evidence against don Gerónimo, who claimed to be a *cacique* of San Sebastián Tectipac. In

⁶⁵ For an extensive study on the colonial affectations of indigenous rulership see Anne Bos, "The demise of the caciques of Atlatomulco, Mexico, 1598-1821: a reconstruction" (Research School of CNWS, School of Asian, African, and Amerindian Studies, 1998).

⁶⁶ Yanna Yannakakis, *The Art of Being in-Between: Native Intermediaries, Indian Identity, and Local Rule in Colonial Oaxaca* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

⁶⁷ Kevin Terraciano, "Writing to the Rescue: How a Zapotec Community Used Native-Language Documents to Defend its Lands," In *Tradition and Innovation in Mesoamerican Cultural History*, ed. by Roberto Cantú and Aaron Sonnenschein. Lincom Studies in Anthropology, 16. Munich: Lincom Europa, 2011.

this case, Zapotec commoners protected their ancestral lands in a Spanish court, using Zapotec-language documents that belonged to households within the community. In contrast, don Gerónimo brought forward seventeen witnesses, many who were Spaniards, and a few Zapotec "caciques" who lived in the city of Antequera and who apparently had formed some type of social contract with don Gerónimo. But don Gerónimo was not even a native of the queche, and by moving to the city and failing to participate in local life, he had little support in San Sebastián.

Zapotec communities in the Central Valley regions shared many defining cultural practices, including tequio, guelaguetza and the cargo system. Those who moved away from their communities risked becoming outsiders by not participating in community affairs. If they no longer participated in the daily affairs of their communities, then people had little incentive to provide them with the benefit of communal support and protection. Similar situations prevailed in other native towns, as evidenced by the many lawsuits processed by the *audiencia* in Antequera throughout the colonial period.⁶⁸

Zapotec Households

Zapotec documentation involving property almost always involves kinship. Households were usually composed of grandparents, parents, and children, and in the case of elite families, servants (*quelahueyàana*) and sometimes slaves (*quelapinijni*).⁶⁹ Property records refer to direct descendants, such as sons, daughters and grandchildren, and collateral kin including, nephews,

⁶⁸ For a detailed study of conflict between cabildo leaders of Central Valley Communities see Beatriz Cruz López, *Pueblos en movimiento: conflicto y poder en el valle de Tlaxolula, Oaxaca, durante la época colonial* (Zamora, Michoacán: El Colegio de Michoacán, 2012).

⁶⁹ C378r: "Seruir como esclavo ò esclaua. Tònia chijna quelapinijni.l.cìcapinijni. Seruidumbre afsi del efclauo o del que firue afsi. Quelapinijni, quelachòco, quelacopàci."

nieces, aunts or uncles. Spouses and unrelated people, such as servants or people of high esteem, are also included.⁷⁰ These records reflect the importance of local social ties. People preferred to bequeath their estates to close relations, but were not averse to leaving property to community members who may or may not have been related.

Zapotec-language documents show a preference to bequeath land to local indigenous relations, as opposed to selling land. And selling land to Spaniards was a last resort. We have already seen the example of the cabildo of the queche of Zimatlan in 1565, which made an explicit proclamation against selling land to Spaniards.⁷¹ Similarly, in March of 1675, a woman named Petronila de Aquino bequeathed a plot of land to her grandson named Pedro Andres, who was a *xoana* from the queche of Tlacoahuaya.⁷² In exchange for four pesos, Gregorio de Mendoza acquired this property, which stood at the bottom of a hill near the main road toward San Sebastian Teitipac. Pedro's father, Mathias de Sosa, agreed to the land sale and oversaw the transaction. While we do not know details surrounding the inheritance, the *xoana* selected a local Zapotec to buy this land, rather than a Spaniard.

But Zapotecs did not reject tools or technologies introduced by the Europeans. For example, in 1614, Sebastian Lopez bequeathed to his spouse, Magdalena Lopez, an axe and a *yunta*, a yoke that attached two beasts of burden to a plow or cart. She also received two parcels of land, one called *Saquiyesaa* and another named *Saquiegaça*. Among the seven parcels of land that Sebastian Lopez held as property, one shared a border with a *xonasi*, doña Beatriz. The bequest of an axe and a *yunta* to a woman indicates how tools were not strictly associated with

⁷⁰ See Michael Galant, "Kinship Terms in Colonial Valley Zapotec". In Roberto Cantú, and Aaron Huey Sonnenschein, eds. *Tradition and Innovation in Mesoamerican Cultural History: A Homage to Tatiana A. Proskouriakoff*. (Muenchen: LINCOM Europa, 2011), 65-73.

⁷¹ Zapotexts Reference Zi565.

⁷² Zapotexts Reference Tl675.

gender-specific labor, but were considered valuable resources for any household. Considering the extensive property holdings of this family, it is likely that the tradition of quelaguetza group labor would have allowed Magdalena to put these tools to use after her husband's death, even if she herself did not use the axe or the yunta.

The *quèya* or Zapotec markets were fundamental spaces that brought together members of society.⁷³ As with other regions of Mesoamerica, the market space served several functions: it was central to public social interaction; artisans displayed their products for barter or purchase; it was the main source for all types of ingredients and foodstuffs used in the preparation of food; and specialists offered ritual items. Long-distance merchants carried products and items from other regions.⁷⁴ Central Valley markets attracted people from various surrounding communities. Fray Juan de Córdova provided several words for market, including one description of the market as a "carnival or party" which took place every five days.⁷⁵

As a public space, the marketplace provided a stage for social validation, as in the case of recently married couples, who by attending together, confirmed their status in local society. Fray Pedro de Feria's 1567 description of married couples' duties suggested that attending far away markets was the husband's responsibility, (along with building a house and tilling the soil).⁷⁶

⁷³ For a detailed discussion of the political and religious aspects of pre-Columbian markets principally in the Maya region see, John E. Staller and Michael D. Carrasco, "Pre-Columbian Foodways in Mesoamerica," in *Pre-Columbian Foodways*, ed. John Staller and Michael Carrasco (New York, NY: Springer New York, 2010), 1–20.

⁷⁴ Of professional merchants Leon-Portilla wrote, "Sabido es que los *pochtecas* operaban ya en el periodo clásico mesoamericano, es decir de III a IX d. C., y luego en los siglos siguientes hasta la Conquista y aun después de ella. Eran dueños, por tanto, de muy antiguas tradiciones." In Miguel León Portilla, *Códices: los antiguos libros del nuevo mundo* (México, D.F.: AGÜilár, 2003), 70.

⁷⁵ C195v: "Ferias de cinco en cinco días o mercados o tianquez. Quèya tòche tòche.l quèya." See also C265v: "Mercado el que se haze, vide feria. Quèya, quiya, lóoquéya."

⁷⁶ The Spanish translation of the Zapotec written by Feria reads: "De la misma manera la muger, no ha de cargarse camino largo, ni ha de labrar la tierra, ni edificar la casa, ni alejarse mucho a los tianquez: por que esto pertenesce a los hombres..." In Zapotec: "Laanicica beni gonà yaga cachàhui còani yo hua neza cito, yaca cànani yo yaca cozaani lichini, yaca çani quyacito: quelani xichiña be ni niguio naca nitij", *Ibid.*, 3

Throughout Mesoamerica, the markets were important centers where cultural, social and economic expressions came together.⁷⁷

In preconquest times, Zapotecs relied on barter and exchange, known as *trueque* in Spanish, to acquire or exchange items. People attended these markets with a variety of foodstuffs, domesticated animals such as turkeys or iguanas, items like feathers or incense used in indigenous religious rituals, and finished goods. From the Sierra Mixe, potatoes and large dried chiles were carried in bundles; from the northern communities of the Central Valley, such as Coyotepec, came the black pottery. Tomatoes, flowers and beans were abundant in the surrounding Central Valley communities, as was cotton. People from the Sierra Norte provided a variety of beans, and from the Sierra Sur they brought reed mats called *petates*, (a Spanish loanword from the Náhuatl *petatl*) from the coast the vendors brought salt and salt-water fish. The products were loaded onto vessels in Tehuantepec bound for markets in New Spain and the Philippines.⁷⁸ People from the Isthmus brought a variety of tropical fruits; the Mixteca supplied important wooden tools such as *molinillos*, which were used to froth cacao drinks in ritual feasts. Finally from the Papaloapan region, vendors brought fresh water fish, vanilla and woven cotton products. Vendors traveled long distances over difficult terrain to set up their stalls before sunrise, so that the market was busy and alive from sunrise to sunset.

⁷⁷ Jose Antonio Gay in the late nineteenth century wrote about the markets, noting the Nahuatl toponyms in Oaxaca, “It is notably clear that a vast and sustained commercial exchange linked communities to one another, who saw the need to understand each other in order to verify their contracts and exchanges”. José Antonio Gay, *Historia de Oaxaca*, (Mexico: Impr. del Comercio, de Dublan y ca, 1881), 33.

⁷⁸ As described by the English traveler Thomas Gage, who rode four horses from Mexico City to Guatemala: “This port of Tehuantepec is the chief for fishing in all that country; we met here in the ways sometimes with fifty, sometimes with a hundred mules together laden with nothing but salt fish for Oaxaca, City of Angels and Mexico. There are some very rich merchants dwell in it, who trade with Mexico, Peru, and the Philippines, sending their small vessels out from port to port, which come home richly laden with the commodities of all the southern or eastern parts”. Thomas Gage, *Travels*, 125.

The Zapotec *cabildos* managed the local market days, which continued to be very important throughout the colonial period. Spanish officials regulated long-distance and large-scale trade and tribute payments, but were not interested in most products consumed by indigenous households. Zapotecs relied on regional trade for their daily foodstuffs and were willing to risk conflict with colonial officials, and even their health, to attend the market. In 1796 the Spanish *alcalde mayor* imposed a quarantine on the community of Teotitlán del Valle, which prevented people from attending the weekly market and banned them from attending other local markets.⁷⁹ The Spanish *subdelegado* of Teotitlán del Valle went so far as to ban communication with Antequera and other communities. He wrote, “As such I have determined that the said head town of Teotitlán del Valle should remain absolutely un-communicated with this capital, as well as with the other nearby towns in the same region or with other people. And I also prohibit other people of whatever status they may be who are residents of Teotitlán, they may not leave...”⁸⁰ When Spanish officials quarantined the community, but still demanded that the Zapotec *cabildo* collect the mandatory tribute for the crown, tensions escalated to the point of rebellion. Women of the community gathered at the church and slapped the local priest, who served as an interpreter between local Zapotec leaders and Spanish officials. Witnesses in the legal proceedings, which included a petition to call in the military, referred to people who had travelled from the Isthmus to trade cotton. Not only was Teotitlán the site of a large market, it was also an important producer of textiles since pre-Columbian times, so people's livelihood, tribute payments and social networks depended on attending the local markets.

⁷⁹ AGN Epidemias Vol. 12, Exp., 5. “Por tanto he resuelto que la citada cabecera de Teutitlan del Valle quede sin comunicacion en lo absoluto tanto con esta capital quanto con los demas pueblos asi del mismo partido como de qualesquiera otro de los comarcanos. Y donde luego prohibo a todas las personas sean de la clase que fuesen que actualmente residen en aquel pueblo el que puedan salir de el...”

⁸⁰ AGN Epidemias Vol. 12, Exp., 5 Foja 4r.

The colonial introduction of money and demands for the payment of royal tribute in coin forced indigenous communities to enter the money economy. Markets became places where people could sell, rather than simply trade, their products or services. In pre-Columbian times, people paid tribute to their local leaders, who would in turn submit the payment to their ruling lord. In the colonial system, Spaniards demanded payment from indigenous communities in cash. Indigenous people also needed cash to pay for a range of new services and requirements, such as the drafting of titles, deeds, and testaments, alms for the church, or legal services for litigation.

It was common for men to travel distances of twenty kilometers with a load of goods for exchange in the markets of Central Valley.⁸¹ In 1694, for example, Ignacio de San Miguel, a native of Tlacoahuaya, declared in his testament that he owed two pesos to Antonio Mexía, from the community of San Pablo Güilá (*Nos ania topa peso lao Antonio Mexía, beni San Pablo Güilá*).⁸² Ignacio also declared that he owed money to Joseph Pachoy from Macuilxóchitl.⁸³ In terms of distance, Tlacoahuaya is about seven kilometers from Macuilxóchitl and about fifteen kilometers around the winding valley floor from Güilá. All of these communities are located in the Central Valley, but most are protected by hills and are traversed several times by small water sources, including the Atoyac River. While Ignacio did not explain the reasons for the loans, the fact that he stated these amounts in his testament reveals the types of interactions among people from different communities that occurred in this region. People attended markets in other communities even when leaders of their own community were engaged in a dispute with the other *queche* over boundaries.⁸⁴ The fact that Macuilxóchitl and Tlacoahuaya were in constant

⁸¹ Nowadays, people continue to walk these distances in Oaxaca to attend market days.

⁸² Zapotexts Reference Tl694.

⁸³ Zapotexts Reference Tl694.

⁸⁴ AGNM 18, s/n: 244v.

conflict over land boundaries did not prevent individuals from continuing to trade with people in the other community, as Joseph and Ignacio had done in the 1690s.

Spanish officials were primarily concerned with indigenous products that could be sold in New Spain or sent to Spanish markets. Cotton and cacao were highly valued by indigenous people, who used these products for tribute payment in pre-Columbian times. *Pulque* or *mezcal* was another highly valued product in Oaxaca.⁸⁵ Colonial officials regarded the fermented drinks made out of agave as a profitable, taxable good and eventually established a monopoly on its sale.⁸⁶ The most profitable indigenous product was cochineal, an insect that natives cultivated on cactus farms. This product was highly regulated and produced much wealth for the Spaniards who traded this commodity in Mexico, Puebla, and overseas markets.⁸⁷

A Celebration in the Queche

During the second half of the sixteenth century, in the midst of the rainy season when the cumulus clouds sit atop the green valley floor, a marriage broker called a *colanij* was summoned by Catalina Quieniça and Gaspar Lopez Elache. The ritual beans called *pichijlla* gave the broker encouraging news and soon their respective children Magdalena and Juan would marry in a

⁸⁵ C267r: “Mexcal maguey affado la cabeça o tronco. Quietóbayèe, quíquetóbayèe.”

⁸⁶ The law read: “Debe cobrarse a los indios la sexta parte del valor del pulque o tlachique que efectivamente vendieren con medio real mas en cada arroba neta siendo exentos los mismos indios de esta contribucion por el pulque que consuman en usos propios y por los que permuten de maíz, sal y chile u otros mantenimientos que asi adquieran para sustentar a sus familias”, in Mexico (Mexico), *Instrucción de alcabalas: ó sea legitimidad de adeudos de alcabalas y pulques de la Nueva España, para que los administradores hagan la debida exacción en los casos que por lo regular se ofrecen en las aduanas* (Tip. del Instituto literario, 1857), 38.

⁸⁷ For a study of the effects of cochineal on the economy in colonial Oaxaca, see Ma. de los Angeles Romero Frizzi, *Economía y vida de los españoles en la Mixteca Alta, 1519-1720* (1. ed. Colección Regiones de México. México, D.F: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia: Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1990).

ceremony customary in the Central Valley.⁸⁸ The parents drafted a marriage contract in which the Zapotec scribe recorded Catalina as Magdalena's mother and Gaspar as Juan's father. The elite families arranged the marriage, or *quelahuechaganani*, in the wake of a terrible smallpox epidemic that lasted from 1576 to 1581.⁸⁹ The epidemic was so devastating that Bernardino de Sahagún, the Franciscan who organized the compilation of the Florentine Codex, feared that the indigenous population in the colony would perish altogether.⁹⁰ Thus, a marriage celebration of this importance offered the queche respite from the ravages of death, which for the third time since the conquest had decimated indigenous communities in all parts of New Spain.

Zapotec marriage ceremonies were the starting point of *guelaguetza* networks that invited members of all social groups to participate. Rituals extended over the course of several days, but preparations began months in advance. Magdalena and Juan's families and their extended network prepared for the event. The planning for *guelaguetza* deposits started immediately after

⁸⁸ AGN: Tierras 256, exp.2 Foja 86. Zapotexts document reference Te593. See description of *colanij* in Córdova, *Arte del idioma zapoteco*, 216-217. And C201r: "Frijolillos a hauas con que hechan las fuertes los fortilegos. vide fuertes. Pichijlla."

⁸⁹ C260v: "Matrimonio. Vide cafamiento. Quelahuecháñani." Whitmore discusses the major epidemics and indigenous population decline in colonial Mexico, in Thomas M. Whitmore, *Disease and Death in Early Colonial Mexico: Simulating Amerindian Depopulation* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 154.

⁹⁰ Sahagún described the epidemic which killed over one third of the native population in the Viceroyalty of New Spain: "Yo que me hallé en la fundación del dicho Colegio, me hallé también en la reformación de él, la cual fue más dificultosa que la misma fundación. La pestilencia que hubo ahora ha treinta y un años dió gran baque al Colegio, y no le ha dado menor esta pestilencia de este año de 1576, que casi no está ya nadie en el Colegio, muertos y enfermos, casi todos son salidos... Si el señor don Antonio de Mendoza que en gloria sea visorrey que fue de esta Nueva España, no los hubiera proveído de su hacienda de un poco de rentilla que tienen, con que se sustentan pocos y mal, ya no hubiera memoria de Colegio, ni colegial y pudiérase haber hecho gran bien a toda esta república indiana, y el rey nuestro señor tuviera más vasallos en ella de los que tiene, y tendrá porque siempre van en disminución, y la causa que yo he visto con mis ojos es, que en la pestilencia de ahora ha treinta años por no haber quien supiese sangrar ni administrar las medicinas como conviene, murieron los más que murieron, y de hambre y en esta pestilencia presente acontece lo mismo, y en todas las que se ofrecieren será lo mismo, hasta que se acaben". Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España, por el m.r.p. Fr. Bernardino de Sahagún, de la Orden de los frayles menores de la observancia*. (México, DF, PRObreo, 1938), Volume III, 90-91.

the marriage announcement.⁹¹ In a private ceremony held at the groom's residence, the closest acquaintances witnessed the small procession; the elders (*penigola*) offered the parents young turkeys and *mezcal*, plus fermented drinks which were essential for the ceremonial meal.⁹² In the coming months the *penigola* prepared ritual speeches, and turkeys were fattened for the banquet.⁹³ At the wedding, the *peniqueche* or commoners would feast on these *guelaguetza* gifts, but for the time being, their attendance to this pre-wedding ritual fulfilled a public role as witnesses to such an important community event. After the wedding the *penigola* or their representatives helped in the construction of the newlyweds' home, or perhaps prepared the soil for their *milpa* (the Mesoamerican crop-growing system that includes corn, squash, beans and chilies) as part of the *guelaguetza* contract.⁹⁴ The Zapotec collective efforts understood as *guelaguetza* were essential in creating new social networks and reinforcing existing ones.

On the eve before Magdalena and Juan's wedding, a special feast was held called *cica quixèe lànij*; no invitation was needed, but those *peniqueche* who owed *guelaguetza* to either parents, Catalina or Gaspar, had the responsibility to attend.⁹⁵ This was a time-honored tradition practiced among the people of the region. A Zapotec speaker from Tlacolula in 1576 named Thomas de Santa Maria declared through an interpreter that: "in [the] pueblo of Tlacolula and others of this region, there is the custom from many years, in this part there is the tradition and it is held as practice and custom ("uso y costumbre"), that when a cacique or principal or lord or

⁹¹ C91r: "Contribuida cofa afsi o para ayuda a cafamiento. Quelaquèza, cáha."

⁹² C267r: "Mexcal maguey affado la cabeça o tronco. Quietóbayèe, quíquetóbayèe."

⁹³ C113r: "Dar palabras de cafamiento. Totèteaticha quelahuechàgãaa, tichapitão."

⁹⁴ According to Ronald Nigh: "...the making of *milpa* is the central, most sacred act, one which binds together the family, the community, the universe...[it] forms the core institution of Indian society in Mesoamerica and its religious and social importance often appear to exceed its nutritional and economic importance". See, Ronald Byron Nigh, "Evolutionary Ecology of Maya Agriculture in Highland Chiapas, Mexico" (PhD Diss. Stanford University, 1977), 6.

⁹⁵ C55v: "Bifpera de fiefta o vigilia della. Cica quixèe lànij."

commoner marries [off] a son or daughter, it is the custom in the pueblo, that his friends or *compadres* or acquaintances each bring to the wedding, according to their means... they do so of their own will, without being asked.⁹⁶ Thus, wealthier female attendees carried live chickens or chilies for the mole, while their husbands offered the parents firewood and incense. The women brought corn for tortillas accompanied by their husbands, who carried loads of firewood on their backs. Scores of people attended Magdalena's and Juan's wedding, which lasted a full seven days; each day the guests were fed, and any food left over was wrapped in tortillas and taken home. Each morning people engaged in *guelaguetza* by helping with the day's cooking and cleaning. No one left hungry. Drums and wind instruments played as people danced in the light of large bonfires. Such was the tradition of a wedding ceremony in the Central Valley.

Seventy-two years after the Spanish began settling in Oaxaca, on July 14, 1593, the *xinicoque* and the *bexuana* who made up the cabildo of San Sebastian Cetoba witnessed, wrote and signed the official marriage contract between Catalina Quieniça and Gaspar Lopez Elache.⁹⁷ Despite many sweeping colonial changes, Zapotec people maintained many aspects of their traditional lifeways, such as the use of indigenous names. Both the name of the community and the names of the parents reveal a combination of indigenous and Christian naming traditions: San Sebastian became the community's patron saint, alongside the Zapotec name of Cetoba. Fray Juan de Córdova called the town "Cetoba" in his description of Zapotec pronunciation, but Spaniards referred to the town as Teitipac, based in its Náhuatl name.⁹⁸ As for the people, the

⁹⁶ AGN: Civil 822. Foja 348r.

⁹⁷ AGN: Tierras 256, exp.2 Foja 86. Zapotexts reference Te593.

⁹⁸ Fray Juan de Córdova described Zapotec pronunciation differences in the Central Valley by comparing Cetoba (aka Teitipac) and Zaachila, noting how the language spoken in the two communities differed, despite their proximity. He compared such differences to Castilian spoken in the northern region of Spain, compared to the same language spoken in Old Castille or Toledo. See Córdova, *Arte del idioma zapoteco*, 121.

baptismal name, Catalina, was added to the Zapotec birth name, Quieniça ("quie" is flower, "niça" means water).

Like their names, the wedding ceremony represented the times in which they lived, when Spanish law required that Zapotec society document in writing important aspects of their social relations. For example, legislation demanded that property arrangements be documented on paper, as validation of individual ownership. Thus, the couple's parents agreed to the terms set by Magdalena's deceased father; the escribano wrote that it was necessary to "make a Carta de Dote (dowry agreement) because Magdalena Lopes, the daughter of the late Gaspar Lopez, will get married to Juan Lopez," [*Conini carta dote niyatini cochaconaa Magdalena lopes ni naca xinichapa quetao Gaspar Lopez gochacanaanij Juan Lopez*].⁹⁹ The parties officially agreed that Juan would benefit from the inheritance intended for Magdalena only after Magdalena and Juan were married; in the meantime, her deceased father Gaspar left legal custody of the inheritance to his wife, Catalina.

Although the Teitipac record for Gaspar and Catalina is described as a dowry agreement it was actually a complex marriage contract executed in 1593. The document confirms fray Juan de Córdova's description of marriage rites in 1578.¹⁰⁰ A religious specialist called a *colanij* read ritual beans based on each name and predicted if the couple would have children, and the sex and number of the child or children. If the prognostication indicated no children, the couple would not get married because, according to Córdova, the purpose of marriage among the Zapotec was to produce offspring.¹⁰¹ In the case from Teitipac, the escribano detailed the agreement between both parties: if Magdalena and Juan were married, then Juan would benefit from the lands left by

⁹⁹ *Xinicoque* is literally "children of nobles," which was the Zapotec term used for caciques.

¹⁰⁰ Córdova *Arte*, 216.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 216.

Magdalena's father. The dowry explicitly states that the lands are for the couple and their descendants, thus protecting community lands from outsiders, including Spaniards. Without marriage, Juan would return to his parents and not receive any of Magdalena's lands. In this way, Magdalena's welfare was protected by the value of her inherited property.

Zapotecs continued to guard sacred cultural practices, native ritual practices remained an essential part of indigenous identity. Magdalena and Juan were married and bore children, who were named according to the Christian calendar. The beans spoke to the *colanij*, predicting the successful pairing of these individuals. When Magdalena became pregnant, the couple guarded their actions and activities, for Zapotecs believed that the womb reproduced the experience of the parents.¹⁰² They called the *penicoxiço* (midwife) who prepared the sweathouse, *yàha*, for the birth.¹⁰³ Before entering the *temazcal*, she “burned incense and dropped some of their wine and lit some candles.”¹⁰⁴

The agreement of the bride and groom's parents, Catalina and Gaspar, allows us a glimpse into the lives of elite members of the community, as they are both through marriage or birth related to the *bexuana* class of Zapotec society. The marriage arrangement reveals that Catalina was married to a *principal* who owned several pieces of land and a house. When her father died, Magdalena was too young to be named a beneficiary. The *cabildo* declared that the parents did not know whether Magdalena, the child, would survive to adulthood, revealing concerns about the health of the community's children and the value of a married couple's children.

¹⁰² Córdova, *Arte del idioma zapoteco*, 215-216.

¹⁰³ C389v: “Sudadero horno para fudar ò eftufa. Yàa, yàha. Vide tamazcal.”

¹⁰⁴ Córdova, *Arte del idioma zapoteco*, 216.

Conclusion

The Spanish cabildo system allowed Zapotecs a degree of autonomy in matters of local governance. The Zapotec *queche* governments that presided over an estimated 100,000 people in the Central Valley in pre-Columbian times continued to control many aspects of local life in the colonial period, despite the presence of Dominican friars and a limited number of Spanish settlers. The fact that Zapotec lords within their own communities continued to arrange and negotiate many aspects of local government explains the relative peace in Zapotec-Spanish relations in the sixteenth century, despite the introduction of many changes. A system of checks and balances moderated relations and interactions between the hereditary leaders who dominated the cabildo, the coqui and bexuana, and the vast majority of the population, the peniqueche. In spiritual matters, the *cofradía* allowed non-elites to attain positions of leadership by virtue of their age and commitment to *queche* affairs, and as guardians of cultural practices. In times of tension and conflict, such as election disputes, the cabildo and the *cofradía* worked out the problems together, with the help of the *xoana-gola*, the "elder-lords" of local affairs. By reading legal documents in historical archives, including Zapotec-language documents, we are able to catch glimpses of how social relations and local ties allowed indigenous lifeways to continue under Spanish rule.

CHAPTER THREE

Guelaguetza: A Zapotec Code of Conduct

Tributo estar junto ya como el de los indios. *Tiçòochijnaya, co, [t]iyòotòpaya.*

Parcialidad de gente en un pueblo para los trabajos del pueblo, o como escuadra. *Tòbicol lába, tóbiquíña, tóbicozàana.l. Tòbiláo, tobicuè, xiquíñaya* mi parcialidad.

Cargo tener de algo o oficio. *Ticàayaquelachina, tòoya, tochània, nòaya, nochània, nacàaya.*

Trocamiento o trueque activo. *Quelahuechàa.*

Entries in Córdoba for indigenous “tribute”, “group work”, “cargo [system]” and “exchange.”¹

Guelaguetza contracts encouraged Zapotecs across all social classes to participate in a life-long system in which sharing, collaborating and exchanging goods and labor according to one's means forged valuable social ties that connected households within a community. This system of reciprocal exchange succeeded because everyone agreed to rules that applied to all participants, regardless of their class or social standing, and everyone benefited from the system in some way or another. Mutual trust made exchanges possible. Elders maintained an integrated, symbiotic system of checks and balances to ensure the collective and reciprocal nature of the social contracts. Households that failed to pay back debts, to reciprocate, were subject to public shaming and social rejection and, in extreme cases, expulsion from the *queche*.

¹ See Fray Juan de [C]órdoba, *Vocabulario en lengua çapoteca* (Mexico: Impreso por Pedro Charte y Antonio Ricardo, 1578). C412r: “Tributo estar junto ya como el de los indios. Tiçòochijnaya, co, [t]iyòotòpaya.” C300v: “Parcialidad de gente en un pueblo para los trabajos del pueblo, o como escuadra. Tòbicol lába, tóbiquíña, tóbicozàana.l. Tòbiláo, tobicuè, xiquíñaya mi parcialidad [sic].” C73r: “Cargo tener de algo o oficio. Ticàayaquelachina, tòoya, tochània, nòaya, nochània, nacàaya.” C413r: “Trocamiento o trueque activo. Quelahuechàa.”

There is little doubt that the *guelaguetza* system existed in the preconquest period, but its precise origins are unclear. In the Postclassic period, as Monte Albán continued to fragment and decline in power over the course of centuries, Zapotec communities emerged in the Central Valley, led by hereditary lords who arranged dynastic marriages with rulers of other communities. Whereas Mixtec elites consolidated their power by arranging marriage alliances among closely related kin, many Zapotec lords found distant marriage partners who offered opportunities to diversify their access to resources, trade and craft traditions.² Royal marriage ceremonies initiated an elaborate network of gift exchange that involved many types of products and services from different communities. If royal palaces are the primordial, founding households of Zapotec communities, as has been argued for the Nahuas and Mixtecs, then royal marriage ceremonies would have involved the participation of all community members.³ The reciprocal exchange of gifts and services in royal marriage ceremonies was replicated in marriages among all households. The royal marriage ceremony, as a major feast celebrated by the community, initiated or renewed a network of exchange that governed all relations within Zapotec society. This network is the *guelaguetza* system. Whether the system originated with royal marriages or not, we can see the system at work in the celebration of marriages and all feasts, in general.

² According to Flannery and Spores, “Although both the Zapotec and the Mixtec used royal marriage as a means of consolidating power and arranging political and military alliances, the Mixtecs were almost unique in their frequency of marriage between closely related individuals.” This observation is based on close analysis of Mixtec codices that depict males who married nieces and sisters in a few cases. Ronald Spores and Kent V. Flannery wrote, “Dahlgren’s analysis of the Prehispanic Mixtec codices lists eleven royal marriages between a male and his brother’s daughter or a parallel cousin, fourteen marriages with a sister’s daughter or a cross-cousin, one marriage to a half-sister, and four marriages to a full sister (Dahlgren 1954:149-151)”. For the Zapotec sphere, Flannery and Spores observe that “There is no evidence to suggest marriages between comparably close relatives among the Zapotec.” Flannery and Marcus, *The Cloud People*, 340.

³ Lockhart, *The Nahuas After the Conquest*, 91-93 and 255 and Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 169-179.

Under Spanish rule, the *guelaguetza* system continued to govern the organization of Zapotec activities within the new economy. Zapotecs in Central Valley communities were able to endure colonial demands for resources and labor *because* of this system. Three aspects of the system, in particular, enabled Zapotec communities to maintain collaborative and collective practices that ensured their survival, despite severe setbacks in population and prosperity: fiestas held at life-cycle events, such as marriage; community labor or *tequio* projects; and the hierarchical cargo system in which men and women served their communities as elected or appointed officials.

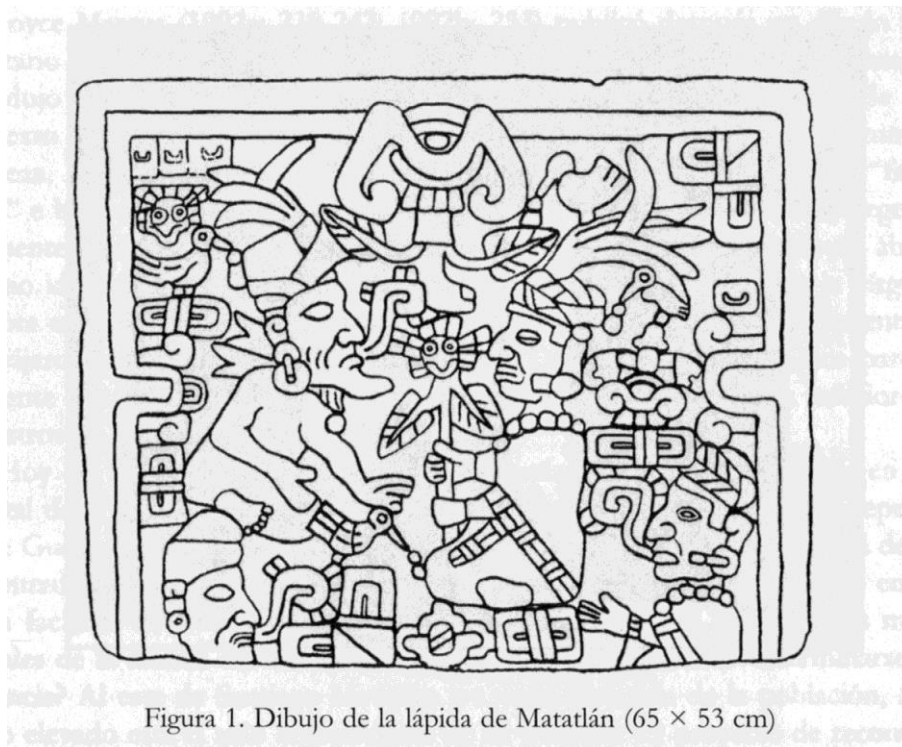


Figure 3.1. *Lápida de Matatlán*, Postclassic Oaxaca, Central Valleys, currently embedded in the façade of a family's house in Matatlán.⁴

⁴ Source: Javier Urcid, "La lápida grabada de Santiago Matatlán. Una Mirada al lenguaje visual de los antiguos registros geneológicos zapotecas (600-900 después de Cristo)" in Sebastián van Doesburg, *Pictografía y escritura alfabética en Oaxaca* (Oaxaca, México: Instituto Estatal de Educación Pública de Oaxaca, 2008). 23-52.

The Pre-Columbian Foundations of Guelaguetza

In the late Postclassic period (900-1500 CE), a Zapotec writer near Matatlán, a *queche* located in the Central Valley region, commemorated the marriage of an elite lady named Qualaala Xopa.⁵ The inscription on stone dedicated to Lady Qualaala Xopa's marriage represents a tradition of inscription characteristic of the Central Valleys. The *lápida de Matatlán*, as it is known today, portrays Lady Qualaala Xopa in a sitting position, holding a ritual marriage staff made of sacred leaves.⁶ Qualaala Xopa listens to the words spoken by her spouse, an older man depicted in the center of the image, whose age is signaled by the wrinkles around his mouth. Symbols and numbers surrounding the couple indicated names and dates.⁷ The artist included the woman's carefully woven attire, feathers, jewels, and possibly colored thread in her hair. The stone engraving recorded plants and animals associated with the marriage ritual. The couple's ancestors, depicted below with speech scrolls flowing from their mouths, represent the lore that is passed down to the newlyweds through the oral tradition. The ritual speeches by elders and marriage specialists named *colanij* were central to the Zapotec rite of marriage, listed by Córdova as *quelahuechàganaañi*.⁸ The elders mixed advice with admonitions about the obligations of the married couple to each other, to their family, and to society.

⁵ For a detailed examination of this *lápida*, see Javier Urcid's chapter called "La *lápida* grabada de Santiago Matatlán. Una Mirada al lenguaje visual de los antiguos registros genealógicos zapotecas (600-900 después de Cristo)" in Sebastián van Doesburg, *Pictografía y escritura alfabética en Oaxaca* (Oaxaca, México: Instituto Estatal de Educación Pública de Oaxaca, 2008). 23-52.

⁶ In modern-day Zapotec weddings, a plant named *poleo* is used in marriage ceremonies. It is collected in nearby hills and made into necklaces which are worn by the wedding attendants. The plant is considered central to the marriage festivities. Other plants mentioned by Fray Juan de Córdova in the *Vocabulario*, include a plant used during confession which he says may also be a dark 'thing' suggesting non-Christian uses. C228v: "Yerva que antiguamente hazian una foguilla ò tomiza y llevaban la a la confesion y ponianla en el fuelo delante del pigàna y con feffavanse de los peccados que querian Esta se llamava. Tòla, que es una yerva de los ervaes, y de allí quedo, tola, por el peccado y afsi dizen Làu Tòla, el lugar del peccado ò de la confesión aunque también es cofa obfcura."

⁷ Alfonso Caso and Mexico, *Las Estelas Zapotecas*, Monografías Del Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia Y Etnografía (México: Talleres gráficos de la nación, 1928).

⁸ See C74v: "Cafamiento. Quelahuechàganaañi, quelacòhueni zoo".

In Zapotec society, marriage and wedding ceremonies announced a new *guelaguetza* network. Men and women celebrated the creation of a new household in the network of community affairs. Married couples received collective support from new household and community networks. The parents of the groom and bride displayed their networks by requesting *guelaguetza* payments owed to them. *Guelaguetza* offers assured attendance at the celebrations and feasts, which signified social approval of the married couple. Those who wanted to join the new social unit's extended network had the opportunity to offer *guelaguetza*, even if they did not owe any to the family. Wedding gifts offered by the guests indicated their commitment to support the married couple, and initiated new networks of exchange within a larger social network.⁹

The date of the *lápida of Matatlán* coincides with a period associated with Zapotec population growth and urbanization.¹⁰ The important Zapotec site of Monte Albán maintained a powerful influence in the Valley.¹¹ The stone registers help explain the importance of marriage as the origin of Zapotec *guelaguetza* arrangements that allowed the elite governing families of

⁹ Witnesses' testimony in the case against don Domingo de Mendoza, the "cacique y gobernador" of Tlacolula, provide clear descriptions of the wedding gifts and labor for the wedding feast provided by friends, family or compadres, regardless of their social standing. AGN, Civil 822, fojas 223r, 225r, and 226r. Gifts and wedding celebrations for pre-columbian Mixtecs included gifts from Zapotec regions, as suggested by the depiction of Lady 3 Flint's marriage in the Codex Nuttall. Bruce E. Byland and John M.D. Pohl, *In the Realm of Eight Deer: The Archaeology of the Mixtec Codices* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 100-105.

¹⁰ Whitecotton wrote, "By Monte Albán III (ca. 300 AD to ca. 700-800AD) the site had grown to enormous size and covered not only the large hill of Monte Albán but also the adjacent hills of El Gallo, Monte Albán Chico, and Atzompa; Blanton (1983b:129) has estimated the population of the city to have been between 15,000 and 30,000 at its maximum during Period IIIb. According to Kowaleski (1983) as Monte Albán grew, there was a concomitant reduction of the rural population in the Etla and Central arms of the Valley of Oaxaca—if not the Tlacolula Valley—suggesting a greater urbanization of the Valley as a whole." Joseph W. Whitecotton, *Zapotec Elite Ethnohistory: Pictorial Genealogies from Eastern Oaxaca* (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University, 1990), 5.

¹¹ According to Whitecotton, "Even though Monte Albán became the elite center par excellence for much of the Oaxaca region and developed its own distinctive heritage, this elite culture never became part of an elite superculture—a pan-Mesoamerican standard emulated by a large number of noblemen with varying ethnic backgrounds." *Ibid.*, 6.

the Postclassic period to extend their influence over social networks. Because marriage ceremonies initiated the complex system of collaboration and exchange called *guelaguetza*, the household, represented by married couples, became the most important social symbol of membership in local society. Elders oversaw the important component of the exchange ritual, as guardians of the social contracts that involved many, if not all, community members. The ancestors depicted in Lady Qualaala Xopa's stone register possess speech glyphs. The importance of including the elders in the portrait suggests that they were the bearers of knowledge who would convey wisdom to their descendants. Elders lent legitimacy to the marriage and offered words of wisdom and experience to the newly married couple. The birds in the image, which carry jewels in their beaks, represent the ancestors and serve as guardians when the elders were deceased. These birds carried sacred, elite knowledge that was vital to the society's well-being.¹² The elite organization of collective activities involved non-elites, commoners or *peniqueche* who through their labor and agricultural contributions received social and economic benefits of small-scale interactions with elites that "translated into large scale patterns," which benefited both small and large groups.¹³

¹² In her description of *pèe*, which was the vital force that distinguished the inanimate from the animate, Marcus wrote, "Anything that moved had *pèe* and was therefore alive, to some degree sacred, and deserving of respect; it could not simply be manipulated, but had to be approached through ritual and reciprocity." Kent V Flannery and Joyce Marcus, *The Cloud People: Divergent Evolution of the Zapotec and Mixtec Civilizations* (New York: Academic Press, 1983), 345.

¹³ For a sociological perspective on the way "weak ties" result in large scale results, see Mark S. Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 6 (May 1, 1973), 1360–80.



Fig. 81.—Lápida 1 del Museo Nacional.

Figure 3.2. Lápida 1, Postclassic Oaxaca, attributed to Zaachila in the Central Valleys.
Source: Caso, *Las estelas zapotecas*, 182.

Guelaguetza was a practical system of collective activities that involved people from all social classes. Commoners contributed to the marriage celebration by offering labor or agricultural products, whereas elites might offer prestige goods. The married couple would repay the goods and services in some way at a later time. The couple's immediate family had the responsibility of organizing all the gifts and labor for the nuptial feast. The networks offered non-elites the opportunity to demonstrate their allegiance to local leaders, while the leaders

recognized the non-elite's membership in local society. The system was inclusive, allowing all people to interact with local elites even when they did not belong to elite circles; at the same time, *guelaguetza* exchanges required resources, and not all members of society had the means to participate. At the elite level, gift exchanges could become competitive, defining the order of elites.



Figure 3.3. Lápida Zapoteca 3, Postclassic Oaxaca. Provenance attributed to either Teotitlán del Valle or Cuilapam. Source: Caso, *Las estelas zapotecas*, 184.

Many features of the *guelaguetza* system and marriage arrangements among elites, described above, can be observed in other cultures of Mesoamerica. Many societies shared traditions of celebrating notable life-cycle events through feasts, for example. Linda Brown described a system among the Maya that closely resembles the *guelaguetza*: “In the Maya region, feasting was a pivotal component of rituals for the elite and non-elite alike. As noted by Bishop Diego de Landa, elite Maya rulers engaged in a form of competitive feasting and gift-giving with

strict understandings for repayment. Social obligations were so embedded in sixteenth-century Maya elite consumption rituals that the debts acquired during feasts did not end with death but would be inherited by surviving kin.”¹⁴

In the Valley of Oaxaca, pre-Columbian *guelaguetza* exchanges were likely initiated in the early Postclassic period, when Zapotec elites moved into the Central Valleys after Monte Albán began to undergo a process of re-organization and fragmentation. The participation of non-elites was more the result of negotiation than of force, since all must have realized the practical benefits of a shared economy. The system's rules of accountability allow us to understand better the mutual commitment of rulers and people to their communities, the so-called micropatriotic aspect of indigenous communities. The system depended on a social contract between a minority of elites and a majority of non-elites that promised to protect the community's resources.

The marriage *lápidas* portray the origins of *guelaguetza* systems in the late Classic period (600-900 C.E.), systems that were deeply rooted in Zapotecs communities by the time the Spaniards arrived in Oaxaca in 1521. By the beginning of the colonial period, the success of the *guelaguetza* system had encompassed all mundane social interactions. As marriage was the origin of *guelaguetza* networks, married couples anchored their households to the community. Households were cornerstones of a complex network of exchange and collaboration that extended horizontally and vertically into every sphere of social life, especially life-cycle events, when the pooling of resources for celebrations and feasts was indispensable.

The practice of *guelaguetza* related to marriage was directly and indirectly documented in various legal transactions of the colonial period. For example, let us consider a legal case that

¹⁴ Linda Brown, “Feasting on the Periphery: The Production of ritual feasting and village festivals at the Cerén site, El Salvador” in Michael Dietler and Brian Hayden, *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 368.

originated in the community of Tlacolula, in the Valley of Oaxaca, which went before the Real Audiencia in Mexico City. The Spanish-language document does not contain the word *guelaguetza*, *per se*, but several Spanish words convey the very same concept. In 1576, a Zapotec man named Thomas de Santa Maria used the phrase “uso y costumbre” when he described the *guelaguetza* gift exchange for weddings that took place in Tlacolula.¹⁵ He declared that when a cacique, principal, lord or commoner hosted a marriage for one of their children, it was local custom (“costumbre”) that the guests (“amigos o compadres, [o] conocidos”) brought gifts according to their means. Each guest might bring for example, one *manta* (finished cotton piece big enough to use as cover or to make clothing), two to three hens, cacao, or other foodstuffs. The guests presente these things to the parents of the couple for the wedding feast. Thomas declared that the guests did this of their own “voluntad” (will), that the hosts did not demand these items. Finally, he stated that when the wedding celebration was over, the guests received presents such as *mantas*. The parents of the newlyweds presented the guests with these gifts.

¹⁵ “El dicho Thomas de Santa Maria dixo que sabe de la pregunta en que en este pueblo de Tlacolula y en otros los demas desta comarca siempre en la contina de muchos años a esta parte se acostumbrado e se tiene de *uso e costumbre* quando algún cacique o principal señor o macehual casa algún hijo o hija se tiene por costumbre de que luego como lo saben en el pueblo sus amigos o compadres conocidos cada uno trae para la boda según la posibilidad que tiene trayendo una manta o dos o tres o gallinas o cacao o otras cosas de comida e lo presentan a los padres de los novios para el dicho casamiento e que esto lo hacen de su voluntad sin ser con pedidos para ello y es usanza e costumbre guardada e que se guarda como costumbre entre todos como tiene dicho porque lo ha visto ser y pasar así y que demás de lo susodicho ha visto este testigo como acabadas las bodas se les vuelven mantas a los que las hayan traído no las mismas sino que los otros dan”. Archivo General de la Nación, Civil 822. Foja 348v-349r.

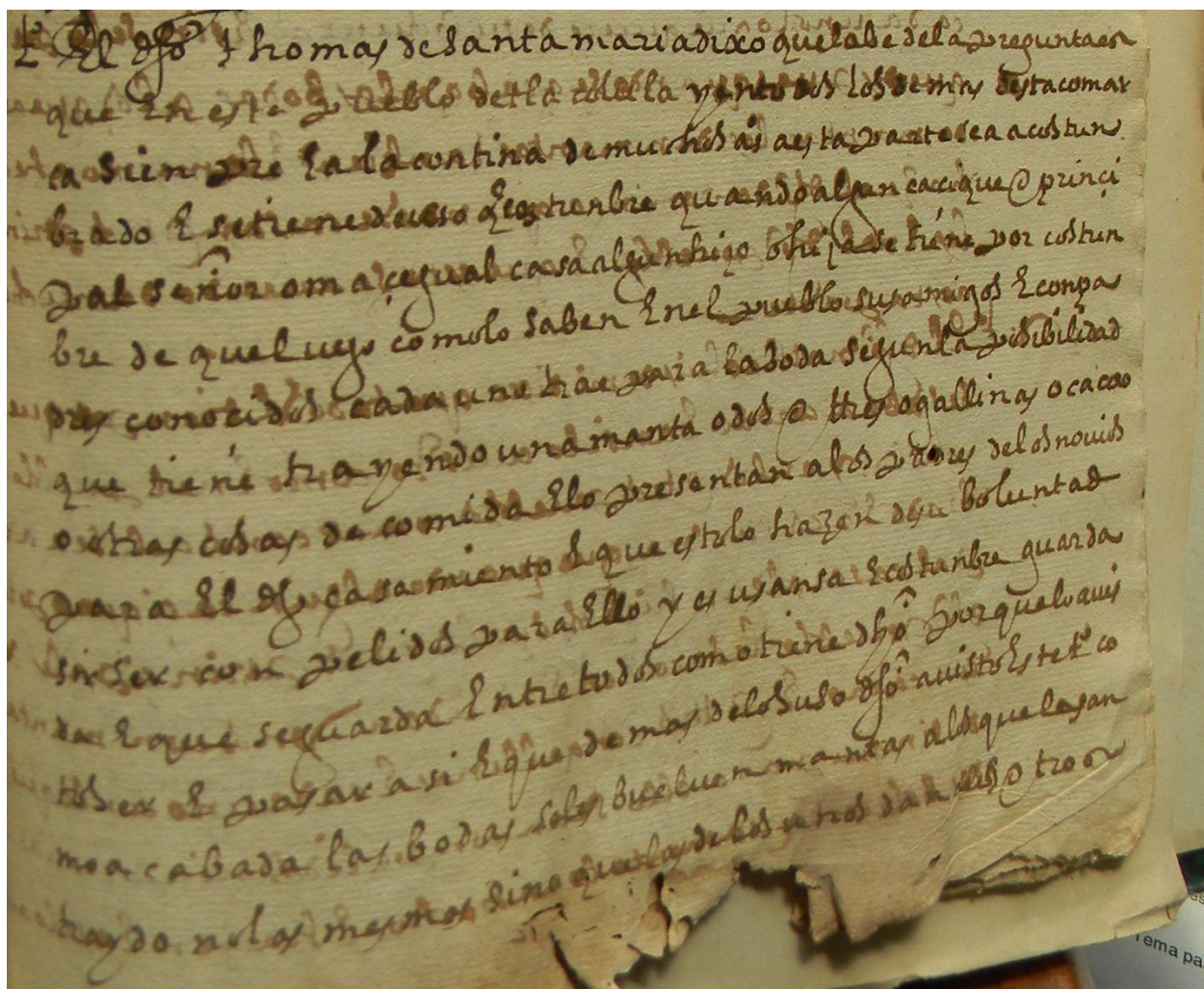


Figure 3.4. Testimony provided in 1576. Description of guelaguetza as “uso y costumbre”. AGN, Civil 822, foja 348v.

In Zapotec society, failure to attend marriage festivities or to offer gifts signaled disapproval or even rejection of the new married couple. Families who faced hardship had the option to send a representative to express their acknowledgement and approval, especially if they already had an obligation to pay back a guelaguetza debt to the host family. Individuals who wanted to contribute to the festivities but were too humble to offer gifts could help prepare food, set up or clean up after the feast. Families with resources might offer generous guelaguetza gifts,

essentially investing in an extended network of gifting with the expectation that they would receive special gifts for a future celebration of their own.

An internal system of checks and balances ensured the recognition and repayment of *guelaguetza* contracts. Gifts offered at feasts were often delivered to *santo* rooms or houses. In the sixteenth century Christian images had replaced native "idols." Many if not most households contained altars dedicated to Catholic saints. These were sacred spaces reserved for the ritual of receiving gifts. First, a family would organize a small procession on their way to the hosting household. When they arrived, the party would go straight to the *santo* room where the elders and the hosts stood in a circle. A *colanij* (marriage specialist) would make some ritual speeches and proceed to offer the *guelaguetza* gifts to the hosts. The Catholic saints arranged on the altar witnessed this exchange.¹⁶

The elders were responsible for witnessing the *guelaguetza* deposits and for overseeing the blessing of the *ofrendas* (offerings to the altar). The host family would then arrange through a network of family and friends to carry the gifts to their proper place. The turkeys or cacao would go to the kitchen, or maybe some turkeys would be taken to a corral to be fattened. Pulque or tobacco would be kept near the altar, to be distributed by the elders. Maize and other immediately useful products would be gathered by the women in charge of the kitchen. Those who offered their labor would get involved in preparing the ritual meal. Women making the tortillas gathered the firewood, another *guelaguetza* gift brought by men.

Men's *guelaguetza* labor duties might include helping to collect firewood and setting up the pyres that would light the nighttime part of the festivities. They helped carry large cooking

¹⁶ Zapotec-language last wills and testaments sometimes refer to bequests of images of saints. For example, Maria de la Cruz Dionisio, from Coyotepec, bequeathed all her saints images on lienzos to her uncles in 1720. Archivo General del Estado de Oaxaca-Alcaldias Mayores leg. 21, exp. 12, The Testament of Maria de la Cruz Dionisio, Coyotepec Oaxaca 1720. Zapotexts Reference Co720.

vessels and dug pits for cooking fires; they cleared space in the household complex where the new bride and groom might build their new abode. Most importantly, the men would organize to prepare the soil for the new family's *milpa*. The *milpa*, which was (and continues to be) a highly important agricultural tradition with sacred and social significance, was not only the source of nutritional sustenance, it was a way to organize the household and the society.¹⁷ They might have also organized their labor to build adobe structures, collecting wooden posts and even beginning to construct a foundation for the new home. These were all-day activities that took place in the midst of feasting and ritual drinking, as the celebration continued.

Meanwhile, the hosts kept records of the collected gifts, ensuring that each contribution was recorded or remembered, and noting whether these were *guelaguetza* payments or new contributions.¹⁸ Collective memory was an important guarantee in the public recognition of *guelaguetza* exchanges; people remembered those who had contributed or paid back *guelaguetza* debts. In 1626, a man from the barrio of *guiequija* in San Sebastian Teitipac, named Juan López, declared that the community knew of the *guelaguetza* he had offered another man from his community, named Fabián Gómez.¹⁹ He affirmed to the scribe:

Fabián Gómez owes two articles of clothing that I gave as *guelaguetza* when his child Diego was married. He will pay 2 mantas and 4 tomines [that] he owes to the community here, Cristóbal Ramírez and Jacinto Hernández, he [Fabián] will pay it. 4 [reales].

¹⁷ The *milpa*, a long-standing Mesoamerican agricultural tradition that brought together societies, is described by Nigh as "an ecosystem characterized by the household production of one of over three hundred varieties of maize, as well as certain companion crops. Its technology provides low productivity per unit of land and per farmer, but is efficient when measured in terms of yield per unit of energy or capital. Its support technologies--e.g. storage and food processing--also involve low capital investment and are derived from long tradition. The *milpa* forms the core institution of Indian society in Mesoamerica and its religious and social importance often appears to exceed its nutritional and economic importance." Ronald Byron Nigh, "Evolutionary Ecology of Maya Agriculture in Highland Chiapas, Mexico" (Stanford University, 1977), 3-4.

¹⁸ The documentary record refers to people keeping *guelaguetza* records in books. One of these books was reported stolen from a woman named Feliciano Bernardina who lived in Santa Cruz Papalutla. Archivo Historico Judicial del Estado de Oaxaca. Sección: Tlacolula, Serie: Criminal, Año 1920, 12 fojas.

¹⁹ AGN Tierras 256: 2. Zapotexts Reference Te626.

Fabián Gómez nozabini ropa lari colohoya guelaguetza chij pechaganaa xinini diego quixeni 2 mantas chela tapa tomines nozabini lahui ruarini ni pitaxij xpobal Ramírez huanee Jacinto herz quequixeni 4].

Contributions as payments for past guelaguetza debts were probably checked against the records of those who owed, since it was important to cancel any outstanding debts and note new ones for future celebrations. Finally, the climax of each celebration happened at the moment of collective feasting. Everyone participated, hosts and guests.

Zapotec Traditions under Colonial Rule

Colonial introductions and processes transformed many aspects of indigenous life, including many of the ways in which guelaguetza was exchanged. The introduction of a money economy altered many types of transactions, to the benefit of Spanish individuals and institutions. Nonetheless, Zapotecs continued to practice collaborative and collective reciprocal exchanges even within the confines of colonial rule. Population decline, competition with Spaniards for resources, and the fragmentation of indigenous communities undoubtedly contributed to turmoil in indigenous societies throughout New Spain. At the same time, new institutions such as the church offered spaces where people could participate in the religious life of their queche.²⁰

Immediately after the conquest, friars sought to document indigenous beliefs and practices with the goal of eradicating idolatry. Throughout Mesoamerica, they observed deeply rooted practices of gift and labor exchange among indigenous societies. Each version had its

²⁰ Bos analyzed the colonial turmoil resulting from Spanish reorganization of the indigenous communities and presents examples of the many challenges faced by native leaders. See Anne Bos, "The Demise of the Caciques of Atlacomulco, Mexico, 1598-1821: a Reconstruction" (Research School of CNWS, School of Asian, African, and Amerindian Studies, 1998).

own name in the local language, and was practiced according to particular local conditions. For example, Fray Diego de Landa described this Mayan practice:

The Indians have the good custom of helping each other in all their work and harvest time. Those who have none of their own people to help them join together in groups of twenty, more or less, and together they do the work of all of them, each according to his lot; and they do not stop until everything has been done... The Indians join up in bands of about fifty for hunting and cook the deer's meat on grills because in that way it does not go bad. When they reach the town they offer their gifts to the lord and distribute the remainder among themselves like friends, and the same is done with the fish.²¹

Landa described low-risk contributions which an individual could offer without undergoing hardship. Collective labor was the cornerstone of a sustainable system that produced a high yield of foodstuffs. Landa spoke of the system in positive terms, and the Spanish friars allowed these practices to continue. In fact, they stood to benefit from the same practices, as they were dependent on indigenous labor for the building of churches and convents, for their money-making enterprises, and for their own daily sustenance.

Guelaguetza was especially important in the colonial period because the collective efforts of households served as a means to protect indigenous property and resources, especially in the face of colonial demands for labor, tribute and taxation. Participation in guelaguetza ensured one's continued membership in the community. The obligation to participate might have come as a burden to some people at some point, but guelaguetza always benefited the greater community and, in many ways, it was the mechanism that held people together when depopulation and external demands for resources threatened to destroy the community. People who drifted away from their communities, who sought to create a network of allies that included Spaniards, essentially abandoned the system of mutual support.

²¹ Fray Diego de Landa, *Landa's Account of the Affairs of Yucatán: The Maya* (Chicago, Ill.: O'Hara, 1975), 70-71.

A Zapotec-language document, written in 1614, makes an explicit reference to *guelaguetza* and proceeds to refer to arrangements associated with the system. Sebastián López a *benehualache* of the *queche* of Teitipac called on the Zapotec *cabildo* to witness and record the words of his last will and testament. He listed his material possessions and referred to alliances with various people, including local *coqui* (lords) and other *benehualache*, through several *guelaguetza* transactions. The Zapotec notary wrote:

Let all the people of this pueblo hear my words, as follows: I am Sebastian Lopez, a native of the pueblo of San Sebastian; I am a member of the barrio of the palace of Cristóbal Ramírez. I suffer sickness in my body, but it is healthy in the understanding and knowledge that I have.

*Quieni quiraa beni quechi tini xitichaya cicanaa Sebastian López nina caya beni hualachi quechi s. Sebastián nagabaya bario quehui xpobal Ramírez tichacaya quela quicha xipellalatia coxacani quela tiyeni quela nacina.*²²

This document was signed by the Zapotec *cabildo* members and marked with the sign of the cross. Although Sebastian Lopez did not explicitly claim elite status, he did belong to a *barrio* associated with a palace and he owned several properties, including seven separate pieces of cultivable land, a yoke of oxen, two different types of houses--one made of *yaga* (wood) and the other made of *quixi* (straw)--and four metal tools for agricultural work. The document states that he had exchanged one peso in "*guelaguetza*" with a man named Juan Martín Satres. This offering was to go to an altar in the church when Sebastian died.

The document detailed other *guelaguetza* transactions in terms of inheritance, designating properties for people who were unnamed but described as Sebastian's servants or workers. He willed a piece of land named *Quegolate* to them. The *cabildo* notary wrote, "The land named *Quegolate* which measures twenty sticks, and shares a border marker with Martin Vasquez will go to the workers" [*quegolate naca cica calebea qto anachaga bizaan myn bazquez quiyapa*

²² AGN Tierras 256: 2, ff. 104-104v, translation, 133-133v. Zapotexts Reference Te614

cijrooxa hueni china çicatini tinia ---- I cuelayoo].²³ Finally, he confirmed his alliances with other prominent community members by leaving them land, for which he requested an exchange of one peso to the local church. This transactions with community members is considered a *guelaguetza* exchange. Sebastián bequeathed the land named *Lachiquieyoocho* to Fabián Lopez. Juan López received the land named *Zahuella*, and the land named *Lachibeteyoo* went to Cristóbal Ramírez.

The *guelaguetza* system practiced among Zapotec households came to a dead end when people decided to bequeath their *guelaguetza* to the Church, which did not have to pay it back. For example, in 1675 (see figure 3.5), a woman named Sebastiana de Mendoza from the *queche* of Tlacoachahuaya left a notable amount of money, in the form of *guelaguetza* owed to her, to the local church for the celebration of masses upon her death and the death of her husband.²⁴ She declared:

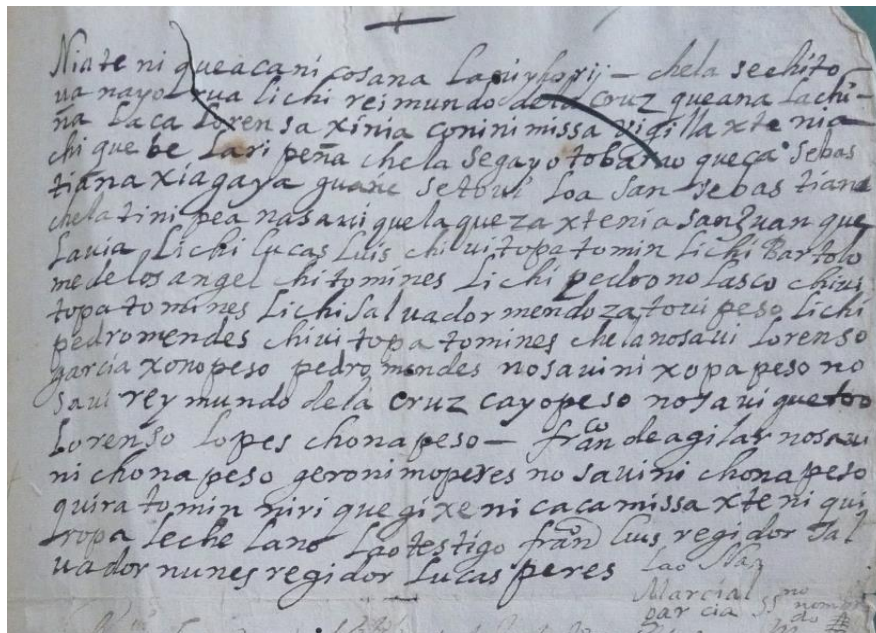
I order that *guelaguetza* is owed to me in San Juan Guelavía in the house of Lucas Luis, twelve tomins; in the house of Bartolomé de los Ángeles, ten tomins; in the house of Pedro Nolasco, twelve tomins; in the house of Salvador Mendoza, one peso; in the house of Pedro Méndez, twelve tomins; and Lorenzo García owes eight pesos; Pedro Méndez owes six pesos; Raymundo de la Cruz owes five pesos; the late Lorenzo López owes three pesos; Francisco de AGüilár owes three pesos; Gerónimo Pérez owes three pesos; they should pay all this money; it will be [for] masses for the two of us spouses.

chela tinipea nasauí quelaqueza xtenia San Juan Quelauia Lichi Lucas Luis chiuitopa tomin, Lichi Bartolomé de los Ángel chi tomines Lichi Pedro Nolasco chiuitopa tomines Lichi Salvador Mendoza tovi peso Lichi Pedro Mendes chivitopa tomines chela nosauí Lorenzo García xono peso Pedro Méndez nosauini xopa peso nosauí Raymundo de la Cruz cayo peso nosavi quetoo Lorenzo López chona peso Franco de Agilar nosauini chona peso Gerónimo Pérez nosauini chona peso quira tomin niri quegixeni caca missa xteni quiropa le.chelano.

²³ AGN Tierras 256: 2. Zapotexts Reference Te614.

²⁴ Zapotexts Reference Tl675.

The testament does not provide any additional details about who would receive this money, other than the church. In all likelihood, the cabildo and the local *cofradía* met to organize the collection of this money and made the deposits to the Church.



Religious and civic duties that were overseen by colonial authorities and church officials incorporated indigenous practices such as *guelaguetza*. The institutions of the *cabildo* and the *cofradía* enabled Zapotecs to participate in the civic and religious life of the community. The *cabildo* system, which was organized and overseen by Spanish officials, relied on indigenous male leaders to fill every office. Likewise, lay brotherhoods were organized under the auspices of the church but consisted primarily, if not entirely, of local men and women from the community. Both institutions relied on *guelaguetza* exchanges, called *tequio* and *cargos* in the Spanish record.

Cargos and Tequio

Colonial officials required Zapotecs to document their obligations to the cabildo and local Spanish officials. However, internal affairs, such as community labor and local customs, were not subject to colonial scrutiny as long as they did not interfere with administrative or ecclesiastical laws or requirements. Spanish records often refer to *guelaguetza* activities indirectly with phrases such as "usos y costumbres" or "se ha acostumbrado" or "voluntad".²⁵ The words *cargo*, *tequio* and *ofrenda* were synonymous with *guelaguetza* because they were founded on the collective and reciprocal efforts of community members and functioned in the same way.

The cabildo functioned as the principal guardian of local affairs.²⁶ Zapotec cabildos defended local interests first and foremost before meeting royal demands. Each cabildo consisted of multiple offices that were staffed by eligible male residents on a rotational basis, elected annually by community "electors." The *cofradía* worked in a similar way. The Spanish term *cargos* was applied to these rotational "offices" which obligated individuals to serve in a given position for at least one year. All indigenous heads of household were required to serve the community in some capacity at some point. The positions were ranked on an ascending scale of experience and responsibility. The civic and religious administration of the *queche* depended on this service.²⁷

²⁵ AGN Civil 822. Foja 348v-349r. The phrase 'usos y costumbres' translates as "ways and customs."

²⁶ Several scholars have covered the topic of indigenous cabildos as guardians of local affairs including, Charles Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*.; James Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest*.; Kevin Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*.; Nancy M Farriss, *Maya Society under Colonial Rule*.; Robert Stephen Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers*.

²⁷ Chance and Taylor wrote on this civil-religious hierarchy in John K. Chance and William B. Taylor, "Cofradías and Cargos: An Historical Perspective on the Mesoamerican Civil-Religious Hierarchy," *American Ethnologist* 12, no. 1 (February 1, 1985): 1–26.

The highest position on the cabildo, the governor, was normally reserved for the highest-ranking hereditary elites in the early colonial period, called *caciques* by Spaniards. In contrast, the office of *escribano* was staffed by anyone who was literate, although this person was also likely an elite with prior experience on the cabildo, for the position of notary required both an ability to read and write and a working knowledge of colonial administrative requirements.

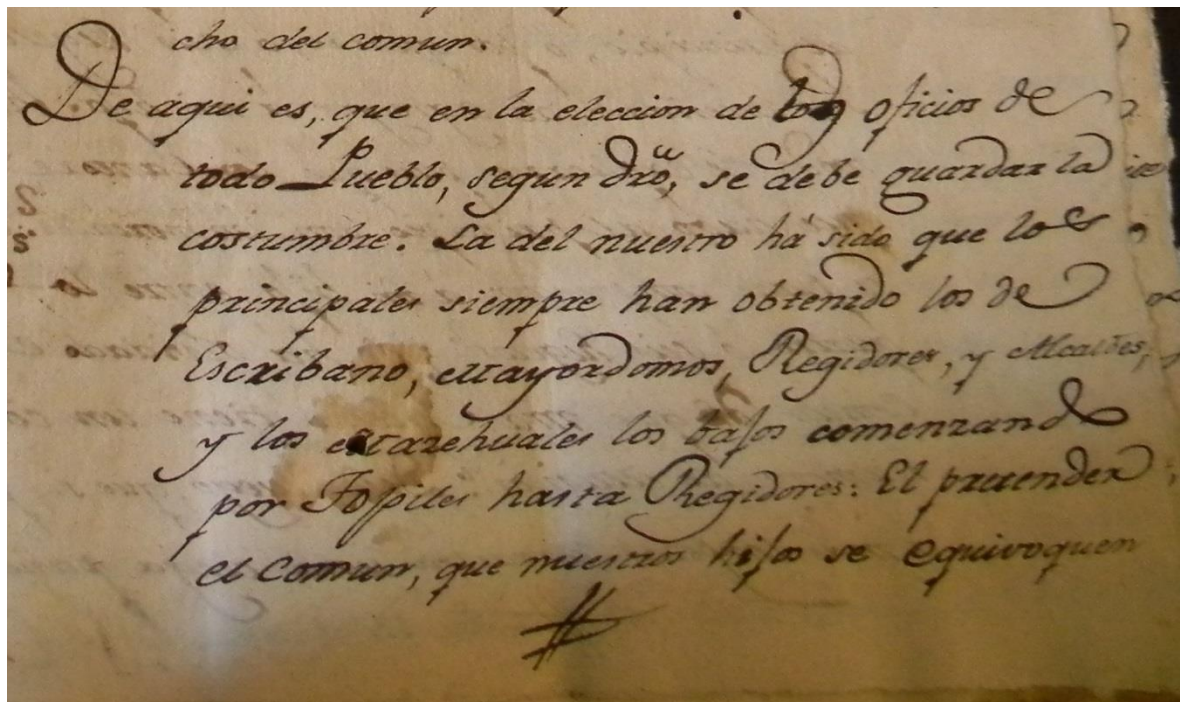


Figure 3.6. AMT, Justicia 1786, Intendencia, Expediente 7, foja 3. José Mariano Garcia and Agustín Hernández from San Juan Guelavía petition for their sons to be given more prominent cargos in accordance to local "costumbre," as discussed in chapter 2.

A most important cargo position for any male or female who was not born into the native nobility was that of the *cofradía mayordomo*, who was in charge of organizing the feast of the patron saint and who arranged smaller religious celebrations on other notable feast days of the church calendar.²⁸ The *mayordomo* oversaw all activities associated with their *cofradía* and

²⁸ Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers*, 121-122.

organized the collection of funds for celebrations. This leader also organized the labor of *cofradía* members designated to provide for the altar and feast of the patron saint. Altars dedicated to specific saints in the local church received bequests from parishioners. For example, people bequeathed lands or livestock to the *cofradía* saints. Those lands required labor in order to prevent them from becoming fallow; likewise, *cofradía* members had to care for the animals that were left to the saints. The *mayordomo* and the *cofradía* members could raise funds from the sale of the land's harvest, or products obtained from the animals, such as wool and cheese. Through this type of labor, called *chiña* in Zapotec, *cofradía* members organized these enterprises for the upkeep of the images and their altars in the church and the celebration of the saints' feast days.

The upper levels of the cargo system relied on older, experienced people whose reputations were well established. This system encouraged civic participation by guaranteeing social mobility for every member of the community; even non-elites would enhance their status over time. Presumably, it would have been financially less stressful for elders in the community to organize fiestas because they would have had an extensive network of *guelaguetza* debts. Participating in the *guelaguetza* system for a lifetime would provide a type of social security, enabling elders and leaders to host large celebrations for the entire community.

Zapotec communities adapted the *guelaguetza* system to comply with colonial demands and introductions. *Guelaguetza* became a fundamental form of resistance to Spanish colonialism. One aspect of this resistance was to exclude Spaniards from *guelaguetza* exchanges. Outsiders were prohibited from entering these gift exchanges. Since communal labor was completed without the exchange of money, nobody could take away that which was accomplished collectively. While it is difficult to know exactly the extent to which Spaniards understood or knew about the system, there is no evidence that Spaniards participated in it. They were not

invited to do so. On the other hand, as Spaniards were not interested in becoming members of indigenous communities, they would not have attempted to enter into the system, even if they had known about it.

The Zapotec concept of *chiña* appears in the colonial documentation as "tequio," a term that was borrowed in Mexican Spanish from the Náhuatl *tequiltl*, "work". The term is used today in rural Mexico for various community labor projects, from repairing a road to constructing a house. Tequio groups were organized to provide labor for Zapotec community or "public" works.²⁹ Participation in tequio was required of all community members. Younger men performed more strenuous work, such as preparing communal lands for agriculture, building a fence, quarrying stones for construction, collecting firewood, and making charcoal. Less strenuous work was reserved for elders. In the course of one's life, responsibilities involved less physical labor and required more knowledge and experience, such as a cabildo office. Women's tequio would have included labor in the milpa fields collecting tomatoes, chillies or grasshoppers after the corn harvest. Additionally, women's work included grinding labor-intensive foods such as dried chillies for meals, roasted cacao for chocolate, or the cooked corn called *nixtamal* that became masa for the preparation of tortillas. Women's tequio also included weaving.

The archival record contains numerous examples of the organized collective labor for projects called tequio. For example, in 1576, a group of men from the community of Tlacolula worked *la sementera de la comunidad*.³⁰ The queche engaged in various forms of tequio, including hunting for rabbits, wild turkeys, agricultural work, and work performed for the local

²⁹ For a study that addresses the importance of Mixtec *tniño* (tequio) in colonial and present times, see Kevin Terraciano, "The Colonial Mixtec Community," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 80, no. 1 (2000): 1–42.

³⁰ AGN Civil 822, foja 203r.

Zapotec governor. In 1709, a group of men performed tequio for their community of Teitipac by quarrying stones for the construction of their church.³¹

Some people benefited personally from tequio service. In 1568, Gaspar Lache from the *queche* of Teitipac received property from two men for whom he had worked.³² Juan Peo and Tomás Hernández agreed to bequeath land to Gaspar, whom they described as their servant or worker. The cabildo notary wrote, “they are giving [it] to Gaspar Lache, [who] did their work”, *[royni gaspar lac[h]e ba ni china x tinini]*.³³ Gaspar Lache worked for two *alguaciles* of the cabildo. Juan Peo and Tomas Hernández measured around Gaspar's house and bestowed Gaspar with fertile lands. In 1593, twenty-five years later, the son of "Don Gaspar López Lache" entered a marriage contract with the daughter of "another noble from the same pueblo, don Gaspar Sevilla". Significantly, Don Gaspar [López] Lache used his Spanish surname, López, in the official transaction. In this document, two high-ranking families safeguarded their respective households' property by setting rules on the future benefactors who were to be married. Thus, the son of the young servant Gaspar Lache, who had gone by his baptismal first name and a Zapotec-language last name in 1568, added a Spanish surname by 1593. Gaspar [López] Lache who was once described as a servant, had inherited valuable land that allowed his son to assume a higher social status.³⁴

³¹ The case of Don Geronimo de Grijalva took place in 1709. AGN Tierras v. 256, exp. 2, fs. 1-165v.

³² Zapotexts Reference Te568.

³³ The names of the men reflect naming patterns of the sixteenth century. Zapotecs received Spanish first names as a result of baptism, but many continued to use their Zapotec names as surnames. In 1568, the young servant Gaspar Elache (Elache was defined by Córdoba as *atalaya* or “watchman”), and Juan Peo (potentially meaning moon or turtle, or coyote) the Zapotec cabildo’s *alguacil* who bequeathed the land both used their Zapotec names.

³⁴ Terraciano documented a similar situation for the Mixtec region where a humble landless dependent from the Coixtlahuaca area found opportunities in Tlaxiaco: “Pablo de la Cruz, who was married to a woman named Juana Lopez, came to Yanhuitlan, from a *sujeto* of Tamasulapa (Santiago Tiñuu) in search of work. He became a dependent in the household of an elderly widow in Yanhuitlan named Catalina Gómez. Catalina recalled how Pablo

Participation in the guelaguetza system required men and women to be responsible for each other, and provided a "safety net" for all community members. In times of crisis such as drought, floods, or bad harvests, people worked together to survive. All indigenous communities sustained themselves on agriculture. Thus, an individual's position as landholder gave him or her a special incentive to participate in the guelaguetza system because it guaranteed the corporate protection of their property. It was not uncommon for entire communities to band together to protect a member's land. In fact, when communities fell into disputes over land, it was often to protect or extend particular landholdings in question.³⁵

The Practical and Social Functions of Guelaguetza

Guelaguetza transactions distributed resources in a practical way and created networks of social support. Refusing to participate in the system, or failing to reciprocate gifts or, would result in one's rejection and potential social isolation. Exchanges took place at the most basic level of society, among households. Exchanges involved small quantities of agricultural products, animals, textiles, or money--once money was introduced and began to circulate among indigenous people, as early as the first generation after the conquest. Although Spaniards introduced money in the early colonial period, few indigenous people had access to coin, and most possessed only a few tomines, coins of the lowest value. The guelaguetza system was flexible enough to incorporate the use of money, but did not depend on it to function. On the

had proven to be very respectful and resourceful, a good person to have around "in place of her son and husband". He ended up working in the household of the cacique and cacica of Yanhuitlan, tending to magueys. In fact, he became a topile (mid-level constable) by virtue of his middling noble status and his new connections in Yanhuitlan." See Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 142-143.

³⁵ For examples of the many forms of conflict over land see, Cruz López, Beatriz. *Pueblos en movimiento: conflicto y poder en el valle de Tlacolula, Oaxaca, durante la época colonial*, (Zamora, Michoacán: El Colegio de Michoacán, 2012).

contrary, the system was an intricate network of credit arrangements that did not require a currency. The system continued to flourish in the colonial period, when access to money was scarce in many parts of New Spain, especially those regions far removed from the silver mines of the north, like Oaxaca.

In Zapotec communities, land continued to be the most valuable commodity throughout the colonial period, especially in the absence of money. Land and family represented a collective enterprise for survival and sustenance. One example from the eighteenth century illustrates how a man sought to use family ties, and a piece of valuable land, to ensure a nurturing, sustainable environment for his young son. On January 8, 1740 Pedro Gómez, a native of Antequera, lay on his deathbed, surrounded by local officials and family members. The father of a very young Pascual Gómez bequeathed his house with a *solar* (a parcel of land reserved for a house) and five plots of land (named *Conia*, *Quecolazii*, *Yobirua*, *Quinatobalaa*, *Cooquinaa quelaxaloo*) to his young son and two brothers. Because Pascual was very young when his father died, the testament instructed that the brothers of the dying man should care for the land in exchange for raising his child properly. He declared, “May the two of them be like kin and let them love my child exactly as I command, so that the generations will not mistreat my child Pascual Gómez”.³⁶ The land was valuable not only for its size, but because it was bordered by two water sources which would have provided irrigation for his crops. By documenting this transaction Pedro safeguarded community control of the land from potential Spanish usurpers.

Because he had extensive landholdings it was imperative that he ensure the security of his property through legal documentation. The will drafted by the escribano and signed by the local indigenous cabildo registered that the property was to remain in the hands of local Zapotecs. By

³⁶ Archivo General de la Nacion, Tierras, volumen 1058, expediente 1, ff.41-43v. This document was titled An740 for Antequera 1740, line 45-47.

mentioning the names of lands owned by people of neighboring communities, the document not only declared the transfer of the land, it also reminded witnesses of intercommunity relationships. Pedro Gómez bequeathed the lands that he had received from his grandfather to his brothers and to his son, Pascual Gómez. In exchange for this gift of valuable land, which was bordered by two creeks, he asked that his brothers Ambrosio and Isidro Gómez care for his young son as if he were their own son.

The use of legal contracts among Zapotecs became increasingly important as Spaniards and *mestizos* sought land for agriculture and livestock on their *estancias* (ranches). In the Zapotec-language documentation, the testator attempts to ascertain that the land will remain in the hands of his descendants: "... neither their children nor their relatives will walk on or encroach on this land, and will never contest these words or ask for these lands because the land was sold..."³⁷ These words, while formulaic, signal the continued control of the land by local indigenous people, specifically family members and their social network. Even when properties were sold, rather than inherited, people made it very clear that no one should attempt to take it away once the transaction had been recorded on paper. The document, witnessed by several members of the community, was evidence that everyone agreed to a peaceful exchange.

Like the last will and testament of Pedro Gómez, *guelaguetza* arrangements were public contracts, but they were not always written down. Spoken agreements before witnesses were often adequate enough to constitute a binding agreement. For example, on October 6, 1643, in the *queche* of Huitzo, a married couple settled a debt owed to Pedro de la Cueva, a Zapotec lord from the *queche* of Santiago, who held four pieces of land as collateral for money he had lent the

³⁷ Archivo del Estado de Oaxaca, Alcaldes Mayores, legajo 6, expediente 12, ff. 20-20v. Zapotexts reference Hu643.

late Pedro Hernández.³⁸ Three children of the late Pedro Hernández agreed to settle the price of the land at 200 tomines (coins) which another *coqui* named Juan de Zuniga was prepared to pay. The document states: “The three of them said that they truly agreed that they would sell [the] land, four plots of inherited land that they received in the testament of their deceased father, Pedro Hernández...” The late Pedro had bequeathed these four plots of land to be used by his children, all the while declaring in this same testament that he owed money to this *coqui* from the neighboring *queche* of Santiago. The idea, then, was that the children would continue to work the land and if they decided to sell it, they would first have to pay the lien on this property.

Guelaguetza contracts fulfilled many important functions, even when the agreements involved money and land. In 1642 Marcos Antonio, a native of San Pedro el Alto in the Zapotec region of the Miahuatlán jurisdiction, requested a loan of fifteen pesos from his father-in-law, Gabriel de Santana. By depositing his land’s bill of sale in Gabriel’s hands, he guaranteed the payment of this money.³⁹ Marcos had purchased the land named *Dellee*, located on the outskirts of the pueblo, from Gabriel. Marcos’ land was bordered by that of Pedro Gómez, of the same pueblo, and Beatriz, who belonged to a neighboring community named San Antonio. When Marcos was ready to pay, a new bill of sale was drafted. A Zapotec notary wrote down Gabriel’s testimony, saying that he returned the land peacefully and willingly back to Marcos Antonio. In the Spanish legal system, the land had been held as lien over a loan of a given amount of pesos; in the Zapotec sphere, the land had been loaned as part of the *guelaguetza* system of exchange. The transaction was made peacefully and publicly, and everyone agreed to the fact that the land had been returned to its rightful owner. Everyone who witnessed the transaction agreed that

³⁸ Archivo del Estado de Oaxaca, Alcaldes Mayores, legajo 6, expediente 12, ff. 20-20v. Zapotexts reference Hu643.

³⁹ AGN 310, Tierras Expediente 2. San Pedro el Alto 1642. Zapotexts Ti642.

nobody in their community should fight over this property, because its owner was well known. The stone border markers had to be revisited and replanted at each corner of the property, due to its distinct shape, a result of the mountainous topography of the region. The land's elevated location near a freshwater river made this a valuable agricultural property that anyone, indigenous or Spanish, would have desired. The freshwater river guaranteed irrigation in a region threatened by drought. Most notably, the document provides an example of Zapotec landholding and social relations in the mid-seventeenth century. Marcos Antonio's agreement was complicated by financial considerations related to the commodification of land as private property. The motive for Marcos Antonio's loan request is unknown, yet it is clear that someone was able to put up the money and that the land placed as lien was assigned a monetary value. Had Marcos not been able to repay this money, the lands would have remained in control of a community member, not an outsider.

Zapotec communities were always concerned with the maintenance and protection of ancestral lands, especially in the colonial period, when Spanish settlers and the church sought to establish estancias and haciendas within or near queche boundaries. Despite royal decrees to protect the lands of indigenous communities, the commodification of land made property vulnerable to sale and alienation, and most Spaniards had far greater access to money in this period than any indigenous landholder. Communal properties were restricted over time, especially in the eighteenth century. For Zapotec communities, land was more valuable than any sum of money. Membership in a community involved making full use of agricultural properties for the benefit of the greater community. The social benefits associated with landholding were twofold: (1) the community recognized who held and worked land, and thus offered a form of protection against anybody who disputed the possession of that land; and (2) the community

understood the importance of that land and its contribution to the greater good of the community.

Successful landholders were rewarded with leadership positions in the cargo system.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Queche of Tlacolula vs. don Domingo de Mendoza

"Los indios naturales del pueblo de Tlacolula que es valle de Oaxaca estamos en la corona real decimos que dieciséis o dieciocho años por esta parte, poco más o menos hemos tenido y tenemos por nuestro gobernador a Don Domingo de Mendoza el cual desde que es gobernador nos ha hecho y hace muchos agravios..."

Accusation made on July 7, 1576 by the Zapotec *pèniquèche* of Tlacolula against their governor, don Domingo de Mendoza.¹

This chapter analyses the extraordinary case of a Zapotec governor's abuse of power, focusing on two principal issues: the ways in which an indigenous insider chose to abuse his pueblo's *guelaguetza* tradition and the people of the *queche*'s response to this abuse. By profiting from his community's labor and goods--without collaborating or contributing his own share--don Domingo's abuse of *guelaguetza* violated the values of social responsibility and reciprocity that defined the Zapotec system of mutual exchange. Don Domingo, *cacique y gobernador* of the Zapotec community of Tlacolula, used his high status as a hereditary lord and his position in local government to abuse the system. Don Domingo managed to elude detection and denunciation for more than fifteen years, despite the fact that his transgressions had become so widespread and involved so many people. Apparently, in the early years of his leadership, he honored Zapotec customs and sought to promote the general welfare of the *queche* within the colonial system. He negotiated the division of labor and tribute with the Spanish *encomendero*, keeping accurate and current records on behalf of the *queche*. But don Domingo learned how to defraud the colonial system of taxation while siphoning off resources from the Zapotec

¹ AGN: Civil Expediente 822, foja 2r.

community that he was elected and expected to protect. Ultimately, the community responded by rejecting his authority and humiliating him at the hands of Spanish officials.

Don Domingo's Cacicazgo within the Marquesado del Valle

The jurisdiction of Tlacolula was located within the legal boundaries of Hernando Cortés' *Marquesado del Valle*, granted by the crown in 1529, but which Cortés did not visit until the early 1530's. Before the arrival of the Spaniards, hereditary native lords and elite families ruled numerous Zapotec polities in the Valley of Oaxaca, which proliferated after the fragmentation of Monte Alban in the Postclassic period.² Moreover, throughout the sixteenth century, the Central Valley was a high traffic zone for indigenous and Spanish merchants and Europeans traveling from Central Mexico to Central and South America, between *la Ciudad de Los Ángeles*, as Puebla was known, and the ports of Salina Cruz and Tehuantepec.

Spaniards placed many of the Valley's *queche* into *encomiendas*, retaining many existing community divisions. According to Peter Gerhard, Tlacolula and Mitla, the two largest and most influential pre-Columbian Zapotec polities in the Central Valley of Oaxaca, were granted together in *encomienda* in the 1520s.³ The *encomendero* of Tlacolula and Mitla in 1529 was a conquistador, a *regidor* on the Spanish cabildo of Antequera, Francisco de Zamora.⁴ As in many other parts of New Spain, Spanish migrants sought permits to settle in Oaxaca, demanding land and labor from Spanish officials. The settlement of Spaniards throughout the Central Valleys

² Jeffrey P. Blomster, *After Monte Albán: Transformation and Negotiation in Oaxaca, Mexico* (Boulder, Colo.: University Press of Colorado, 2008), 3-6.

³ Peter Gerhard, *A Guide to the Historical Geography of New Spain*, Cambridge Latin American Studies 14 (Cambridge: University Press, 1972), 190.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 190.

exerted new pressures on the indigenous communities of the region.⁵ Don Domingo de Mendoza was born around this time of transformation; he was an heir to the *cacicazgo* of Tlacolula.

The territory of the Marquesado del Valle was challenged by several Spanish conquistadors who desired encomiendas in the Central Valley, and the Dominican Order. In 1528 the Dominicans began to settle in several important queche and, with the labor and tribute of indigenous locals, built churches and convents throughout the Central Valley. Other religious orders traveled through the Oaxacan Central Valleys; around 1533, a group of Franciscans led by fray Martín de Valencia made their way to the Port of Salina Cruz in Tenhuantepec, hoping to board a ship to the Philippines. Eight of the first twelve Franciscans to arrive in Mexico in 1524 journeyed through the Central Valleys, including fray Toribio de Benavente, or Motolinía.⁶ Thus, Spaniards learned quickly about the natural resources and the large indigenous populations of the Oaxaca region, and its potential for the encomienda system.⁷ But many encomiendas were not held for long. William Taylor found that five of the ten encomiendas held in the Central Valley were revoked by 1559, including Mitla (Mitla and Tlacolula were often considered one entity).⁸ Eventually, after several disputes involving the Cortés' marquezado, Tlacolula was reclaimed by the crown and became part of the *alcaldía mayor* of Antequera from 1552 until 1603. During this period, the *corregimientos* in this area were restructured, and a major epidemic of smallpox broke out in 1576.

⁵ The Archivo General de las Indias holds numerous petitions from Spaniards wanting to settle in Oaxaca, such as: AGI, Contratación, 5454, General de Parte, Indiferente 208, Pasajeros a Indias L14.

⁶ Fray Toribio Motolinía, *Motolinía's History of the Indians of New Spain*. Translated and edited by Elizabeth Andros Foster (Berkeley, Calif. The Cortés Society, 1950), 196-197.

⁷ The encomienda system was a royal grant from the Spanish Crown bestowed upon servants to the Crown, primarily conquistadors and the first Spanish settlers. The Spanish encomenderos (people who held encomiendas) were responsible for overseeing the Christianization of indigenous people and the re-organization of local communities. Natives were required to pay tribute and labor in exchange for the "protection" of the Spanish Crown represented by the encomenderos.

⁸ William B Taylor, *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca*, 36.

In the Postclassic period, multiple lordly establishments throughout the Central Valleys, governed by elite families, replaced the centralized influence and control of Monte Alban. Zapotec lords ruled from palaces called *quehui*; they organized the the *chiña* draft labor of the peniqueche for local public works. Political alliances were intertwined with trade and marriage networks that extended across regions and ethnic states.⁹ The Spanish-led process of conquest and colonization did not destroy local governments.¹⁰ Local rulers and elites continued to govern their communities in most places, as long as they cooperated to some acceptable degree with Spanish officials. After the conquest, they were responsible for channeling the labor and tribute of commoners to Spanish officials and priests, and participating in mandatory Christian activities. Indigenous lordly establishments, redefined as *cacicazgos* by Spaniards, survived the conquest and played a vital role in the colonial system.

Although indigenous leaders of communities who were recognized as caciques were expected by Spanish officials to coordinate and organize the labor and tribute requirements of the encomienda, or tribute payments to the crown, they did not blindly follow Spanish orders. Rather, indigenous lords negotiated with Spanish officials to the best of their abilities and within

⁹ The following explanation about the *cacicazgo* as synthesized by Jeffrey Blomster, “[t]he extent and identity of a Mesoamerican city-state is defined by affiliation with a ruler rather than a territory” (Smith 2003a: 36). A Royal family rules a *cacicazgo*, with close kinsmen as noble administrators; each has a capital center (*cabecera*) and surrounding subject communities that provide labor and support (Spores 1967). Social stratification is well developed, often with beliefs in separate origins for nobles and commoners. The well-documented city-states (*altepetl*) of Central Mexico had additional classes, including slaves and different divisions of commoners based on access to land”. Blomster, *After Monte Albán*, 22.

¹⁰ The sixteenth-century indigenous chronicler, Fernando Alvarado Tezozomoc, observed: “Es generalmente creído que el régimen imperante en México-Tenochtitlan, antes de la llegada de los españoles se extinguió por completo con la conquista realizada por estos... Y bien lo cierto es que no fue así. Contra lo que se cree generalmente, el régimen político y dinástico, continuo imperturbable por algún tiempo después de realizada la conquista de Mexico-Tenochtitlan...” See Fernando Alvarado Tezozómoc, *Crónica mexicana*, ed. by Mario Mariscal (México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1943), xxvi.

certain limits. Caciques adapted to numerous changes both before and after the conquest.¹¹ Like Charles Gibson, Taylor observed that the colonial system relied on native elites and their ability to govern, and that the "recognition of the native elite was a practical expedient in early colonial administration. The nobles' loyal service in the years immediately after the conquest ensured a peaceful transition to colonial rule and kept the native social structure largely intact."¹² Nonetheless, numerous colonial changes, including competition for resources with Spaniards and a steep decline of the native population, resulted in the gradual transformation of local indigenous government, as we will see in don Domingo's case.

Don Domingo de Mendoza, Cacique y Gobernador de Tlacolula

On the second week of July, the full moon signaled the proper time to sow the *maize* seeds, and allowed an accurate calculation of the agricultural cycle according to the ritual calendars kept by the *benegola* (elders) and the *colanij* (ritual specialists). The elders convened to discuss the division of labor while the Zapotec cacique y gobernador of Tlacolula, don Domingo de Mendoza, sat in his house with some of the *bexuana* and *coqui* who served as *alcaldes* in Tlacolula's *cabildo*, drinking pulque.¹³ The *cacique* celebrated a bountiful interim harvest from the *sementera de la comunidad* (the community's common land). Meanwhile, the *pèniqùèche* carried squash and bean vines into the covered patio of his house, where they would

¹¹ Redmond and Spencer argue that "...the *cacicazgo* was a highly successful political strategy that was pursued by a great number of pre-Columbian societies under a variety of sociopolitical and environmental conditions. The centralized but generalized rule by hereditary caciques served to administer supra-village polities of a considerable range of sizes, and a variety of external relations reinforced the cacique's authority." See "The Cacicazgo, An Indigenous Design by Elsa M. Redmond and Charles S. Spencer" in Joyce Marcus, Judith Francis Zeitlin, and Ronald Spores, *Caciques and Their People: A Volume in Honor of Ronald Spores* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan, 1994), 221.

¹² Taylor, *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca*, 37.

¹³ Don Domingo's case was included in Taylor's description of the dangers of drinking among colonial caciques in William B Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide & Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1979), 27.

not be ruined if it rained in the middle of the night. This harvest included several types of squash, including one called *xijcatinyòoniça*, which was used to make wine.¹⁴ The *pèniquèche* also harvested grasshoppers from the bean plants, a staple of local cuisine. The workers placed garbanzo beans in large reed baskets to be hulled and dried for sale in the local market. In the kitchen, women cooked over a *comal* [terracotta griddle] added firewood, roasted chilies and stirred terracotta pots with heavy wooden spoons. The women kneeling on the *petates* (reed mats) mastered the *quíequíche* [grinding stone] with their arms, shaping the *nixtamal* [corn which has been processed and cooked with lime, making it soft for grinding] called *xòopanilla* into tortillas.¹⁵ The wives of the workers prepared and served don Domingo's meals because the *pèniquèche* had come as a married couple to offer their *chiña* (tequio) to the local lord, as the *guelaguetza* custom dictated. Don Domingo and his *tequitlatos* (tax collectors) did not need to supervise any of this because the workers obeyed an integrated, time-honored system of checks and balances. He was probably not aware, however, that a week earlier, on July 7, 1576, emissaries from the community had filed a legal suit against him in the Real Audiencia in Mexico City.¹⁶

Representatives of the community claimed that don Domingo de Mendoza had abused his power as governor for over sixteen years, a time during which he continuously profited from the community's resources and labor. The *queche* members who performed collective and

¹⁴ C67r: "Calabaça para vino o agua delas altas. Xijcayàche, xijcatiyòoniça, xijcaquéga." Córdova included this plus twelve other entries for various types of squash.

¹⁵ C254r: "Maiz sancocado para hacer pan. Nilla, xòopanilla." And C266v: "Metatl piedra en que muelen para tortillas. Quíche, quíequíche."

¹⁶ AGN Civil, Expediente 822, Foja 1. "Los indios y naturales desde pueblo de Tlacolula que está en el Valle de Oaxaca estamos en la corona Real decimos que dieciséis dieciocho años por esta parte poco más o menos hemos tenido y tenemos por nuestro gobernador a Don Domingo de Mendoza el cual desde que es gobernador nos ha hecho y hace muchos agravios conforme este memorial de que hacemos presentación y demás desde diez años a esta parte."

reciprocal labor through the *guelaguetza* system protested their *cacique*'s failure to contribute to the Zapotec institution on which they depended as a community. All the grievances were related to the *guelaguetza* system that was practiced throughout the region. The *pèniqùèche* sued the *cacique* when they could no longer tolerate the fact that don Domingo's *tequitlatos* demanded a lion's share of the kill from communal hunting expeditions as *guelaguetza* contributions to the lord's feasts. The *pèniqùèche* could no longer tolerate the damage done to their fields by don Domingo's livestock. These animals grazed on the very lands that people depended on for their sustenance and for *guelaguetza* exchanges. Don Domingo was accused of not compensating those who worked on his personal lands and in his household. The plaintiffs accused don Domingo of being drunk all the time. He allegedly had beaten people who did not report for labor service. He had demanded that the *pèniqùèche* contribute *guelaguetza* for his children's weddings. Finally, he was also accused of stealing goods from *tequio* labor groups and individuals. This *tequio* was part of the collective *guelaguetza* labor required of all *queche* residents.

Despite the numerous accusations against Don Domingo that implicated him in crimes against members of his community, royal officials who adjudicated the dispute focused on the *cacique*'s crime against the crown--his collection and payment of taxes.¹⁷ As the highest-ranking indigenous representative of Tlacolula, don Domingo de Mendoza was responsible for the annual collection of ten pesos in tribute from the eligible residents of the *común y república*.¹⁸ He was accused, specifically, of hiding indigenous residents of Tlalolula from the tribute rolls, and thus diverting the crown's income to his own pockets.

¹⁷ AGN Civil, Expediente 822, foja 102.

¹⁸ AGN Civil, Experiente 822, foja 1.

In the 1570s, when this suit was filed, the title of cacique y gobernador signaled that don Domingo de Mendoza was a descendant of pre-Columbian hereditary lords. The highest-ranking position on the Spanish-style municipal council or cabildo, that of the gobernador, was only granted to high-ranking *principales* who were elected by other male nobles of the community, according to Spanish and local custom.¹⁹ The precise date of don Domingo's birth is not known. He was born in the 1520's, right around the time when the Spaniards arrived in Oaxaca. Details of his family's genealogy are scant, but he maintained relations with several lords of neighboring queche. Spaniards recognized caciques as “natural lords” and depended on them as intermediaries who facilitated tribute collection and organized labor drafts for Spanish encomiendas and religious projects.²⁰ Don Domingo's tenure in Tlacolula was exceptional in several ways: the queche lacked both a resident Spanish official and a priest, and it had no church. Don Domingo ran his *cacicazgo* without direct interference or supervision by Spaniards.

The documentary trail left behind by don Domingo shows that the Zapotec cacique was intelligent, cunning and greedy. He was especially keen in dealing with Spanish officials, their obsession with administration, and their constant and often contradictory demands. In 1577 he appeared before the Spanish corregidor, Alonso de Canseco, alongside other members of the cabildo and at least one other *coqui* named Martín de ÁGüilár. Canseco had summoned the cabildo in Tlacolula to conduct a questionnaire; a priest named Bartolomé Martín served as interpreter, translating Zapotec and Castilian. The questionnaire was designed to compile

¹⁹ Charles Gibson found that in Tlaxcala, lords continued rotating the position of gobernador according to the pre-Columbian patterns of rotation that governed the election of the tlatoani. For a detailed study of Nahuatl cabildo elections see Charles Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*.

²⁰ The sixteenth century chronicler, Tezozomoc wrote: “en 1512, fué prescrito un tratamiento especial para los jefes indígenas de las Indias Occidentales por las leyes españolas, y posteriormente, Felipe II y sus sucesores, despacharon diversas cédulas manteniendo los privilegios de rango para los jefes y caciques en general, llamados comúnmente “señores naturales”; tratamiento que ellos se daban a sí mismos, como se ve en numerosas relaciones de méritos y servicios...” In Alvarado Tezozómoc, *Crónica mexicana*, xxvi.

information for the *Relaciones Geográficas* decreed by King Phillip II.²¹ A notary named Baltazar de Ribera recorded answers given to the questions, grappling with the spelling of indigenous words and misreporting some basic facts.²² The answers given to the questions appear to be terse and simplified, whether because the Zapotecs said little, or the interpreter understood little, or the notary wrote little. The relación provides a bare minimum of information about the community. Of those from Tlacolula who attended this meeting, only the Zapotec *alcaldes*, Diego de Velasco and don Alonso [Fernández], and the *coqui* don Martín de AGüilár, signed the document in 1577.²³ Don Domingo, who had signed documents in his defense one year earlier during the legal proceedings against him, did not sign the royal questionnaire.

The trial against don Domingo reveals that his social networks included people who served in positions of colonial government, such as court interpreters who spoke Nahuatl and Zapotec.²⁴ Like the indigenous intermediaries described by Yanna Yannakakis, he was versed in two worlds; the local Zapotec ways and the Spanish ones.²⁵ The Zapotec gobernador managed to maintain control of the *queche* of Tlacolula by manipulating both his Spanish and Zapotec connections. He was able to maintain a safe distance away from Spanish officials. He appeared

²¹ Don Domingo is included in the list of lords who appeared to answer the questionnaire for the Spanish King. See René Acuña, *Relaciones Geográficas Del Siglo XVI / Edición de René Acuña*, 1a ed. (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, 1984), Tomo Segundo, 251.

²² Acuña wrote, “Lo mismo que en las otras RGs en que Baltazar de Ribera hizo el papel de escribano, en ésta hay muchas deficiencias que afectan la lectura de las palabras indígenas, así como la transmisión eventual de algunos datos.” Ibid. Tomo Segundo, 251.

²³ Ibid., 258.

²⁴ AGN Civil, Expediente 822, foja 63r & 64r.

²⁵ For a detailed study of indigenous intermediaries in Oaxaca see Yanna Yannakakis, *The Art of Being in-Between: Native Intermediaries, Indian Identity, and Local Rule in Colonial Oaxaca* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

to be a good Christian by hosting large feasts on saint's days and other church holidays, which were organized through the community's internal network of exchange and collaboration.

Most importantly, don Domingo maintained a prominent local profile, choosing to live in Tlacolula rather than the Spanish administrative and ecclesiastical center of Oaxaca, in the city of Antequera, where many caciques chose to reside. Despite his participation in church activities and his claim to being a good Christian, the *cacique* continued to participate in Zapotec religious rituals in neighboring queche such as Teitipac, from which he was accused of idolatry and imprisoned in 1573. In testimony on the cacique's behalf, a 32-year-old *principal* named Domingo Hernández paradoxically informed Spanish officials of don Domingo's imprisonment. The principal claimed that don Domingo was not guilty of hiding tributaries because he was, at the time of the alleged act, "in the jail of Teitipac [due to] certain idolatries."²⁶ Don Domingo's incarceration was corroborated by another supporter: sixty-year-old Mateo Luis, a Zapotec mayordomo, stated that he "did not know or understand that indian tributaries had been hidden," but that he was "certain that don Domingo did not order their hiding, and was not aware of this [crime], because it is well known as public and notorious information that don Domingo was in prison with don Diego Hernández [who is a] principal of this pueblo."²⁷ It appears that Teitipac continued to be an important place for Zapotec ritual and religious practice in the second half of the sixteenth century.

Don Domingo seems to have avoided regular interaction with Spaniards. Not a single Spaniard served as a witness in the proceedings. Whereas many caciques in New Spain sought

²⁶ AGN: Civil Expediente 822, foja 208r. "Estando preso el dicho don Domingo en la cárcel de Teitipac por ciertas idolatrías."

²⁷ AGN: Civil Expediente 822, foja 208r. "Mateo Luis, indio mayordomo de la comunidad de Tlacolula de sesenta años... mediante los dichos interpretes dijo que... no se supo ni entendió que se hubiesen escondido ningunos indios tributarios... tiene por cierto que no los mando esconder el dicho Don Domingo ni tal supo porque puede haber tres años que estando preso el dicho Don Domingo en el pueblo de Teitipac estaba allí preso con Don Diego Hernández principal de este pueblo y aquí se dijo por cosa pública y notoria..."

to ingratiate themselves with Spaniards, don Domingo did not seem to know any Spaniards personally. The relative absence of encomenderos and other Spaniards in this area of the Marquesado del Valle, and a large indigenous population, created a unique Oaxacan socio-political environment in which “caciques who considered themselves aristocrats on the Spanish model” ruled large indigenous communities.²⁸ In his lifetime, he seems to have amassed a small fortune. When judges of the Real Audiencia ordered an inventory of don Domingo's belongings, it recorded only property that was deemed valuable in the eyes of the Spaniards. On December 5, 1576 the record shows that the cacique owned a variety of domestic animals, including an *estancia* that contained 260 sheep, 400 goats, 210 kids, 60 female horses with 20 offspring, 7 studs, 6 bulls, 6 mules and 1 blonde horse, [1 *estancia* of ganado menor that contained 260 obejas, 400 cabras, 210 chivos, 60 yeguas de vientre and 20 crias 7 garañones, 6 bueyes, 6 mulas and 1 caballo rubio].²⁹ The milk from the animals was used to make cheese, the sheep produced wool for local weaving communities like Teotitlán and the goats were likely sold for their meat. His ownership of six mules suggests that don Domingo was involved in long-distance trade. Furthermore, the fact that the cacique owned a horse is noteworthy as natives were required to petition special licenses from colonial officials for this privilege. Don Domingo also owned an African slave named Francisco, who was described as a *ladino* (i.e., someone who knew Spanish to some degree) of approximately 24 years in age.³⁰ In this period, the purchase of a young, *ladino* African slave cost hundreds of pesos and must have been considered a symbol of high status for the cacique. Considering that the cacique had the entire queche at his disposal for labor and tribute, one wonders what types of labor the African slave performed. His success as a

²⁸ Taylor, *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca*, 38.

²⁹ AGN: Civil Expediente 822, foja 191r.

³⁰ AGN: Civil Expediente 822, foja 191r.

tribute-collecting lord brought him so much wealth that in 1579, when the court ruled against the cacique, he was forced to pay a huge fine for his transgressions. The court recorded: “In Mexico on the third of October of 1579, don Domingo, the Indian governor of the pueblo of Tlacolula, condemned by the Real Audiencia, deposited two thousand one hundred pesos in *oro comun* in the treasury....”³¹ In the end, don Domingo paid a significant amount of money in fines, bribes and lawyers' fees.

The many grievances listed by Zapotec commoners in the case against don Domingo surfaced only in the later years of the cacique's tenure. In the earlier years of his rule, the cacique and the community seemed to work together for the benefit of both sides. For example, when they first arrived in Tlacolula, Spanish officials chose an alternative site for the construction of a Spanish-style center plaza, after deciding that the original site was geographically undesirable. The Spanish officials who restructured the city center chose an elevated site that included part of don Domingo's land, essentially invading the Zapotec lord's personal property.³² Before the church was built, earthquakes in the region had damaged the Spanish-style buildings, so the Spaniards decided that the placement of the future church required a more suitable location where water from the *ciénegas* (muddy, damp or swampy earth) would not threaten the building or surrounding government square.³³ Thus, when the town

³¹ AGN Civil Expediente 822, foja 340r. “En México a tres de Octubre de mil y quinientos setenta y nueve años Don Domingo Indio gobernador que fue del Pueblo de Tlacolula metió en la caja dos mil cient pesos de oro común en que fue condenado por la Audiencia Real...”

³² Today, the church and plaza of Tlacolula remain in the place where the Spaniards chose to relocate after the first choice resulted undesirable.

³³ AGN: Civil Expediente 822, foja 350r.

was reorganized by Spanish officials, the community helped to rebuild don Domingo's buildings, which included a corral for his sheep and a new house.³⁴

In 1560, apparently, don Domingo played a leading role in defying Spanish institutions. One witness declared: "Ten years ago don Domingo held a meeting at the church, with all the tequitlatos and the nobles, where he said, 'you know that the [Spanish officials] will come to count the tributaries in this town. It is best that you hide some of these taxpayers, otherwise the [Spanish officials] will demand that we feed the friars and pay them more than we have.'"³⁵ In response, the indigenous leaders agreed and proceeded to hide people in "the barrio known as Quaxoba in the Zapotec language."³⁶

³⁴ AGN: Civil Expediente 822, foja 350r.

³⁵ AGN Civil, Expediente 822, foja 203v.

³⁶ AGN Civil, Expediente 822, foja 203v.

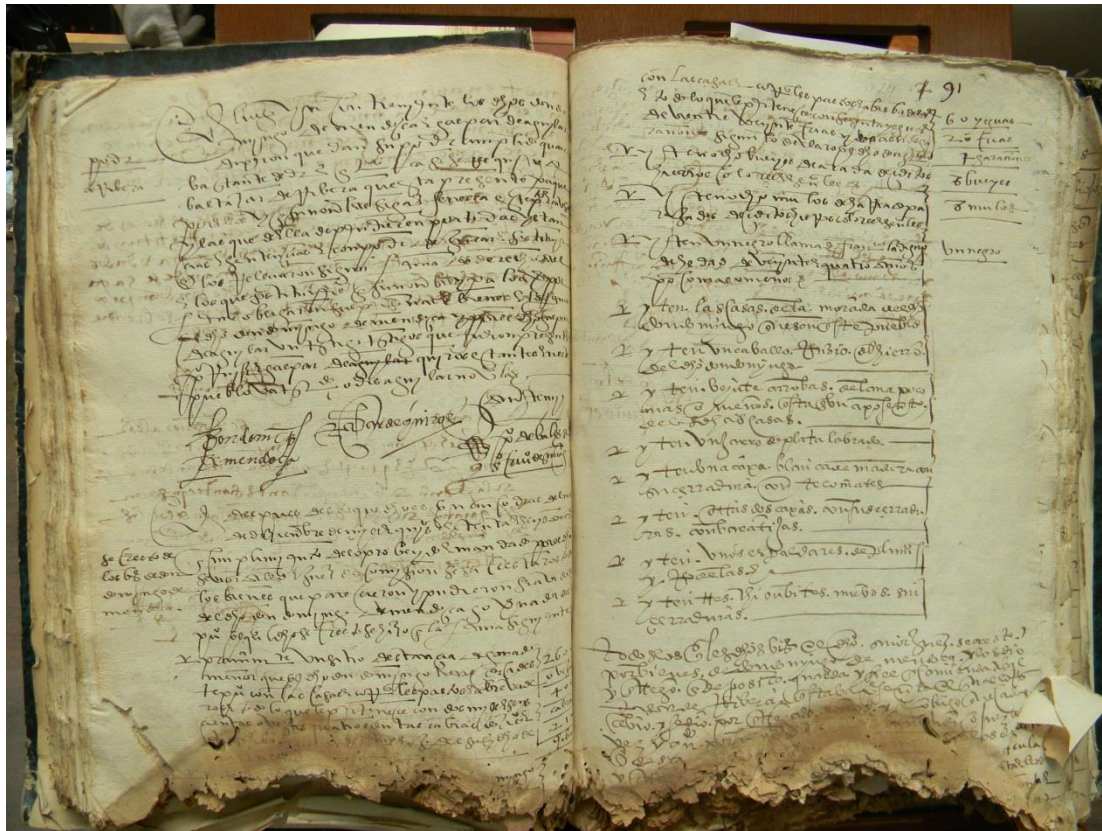


Figure 4.1. 1576, “Bienes de don Domingo de Mendoza”, including the African slave named Francisco. AGN: Civil Expediente 822, foja 191r.

Summarizing the testimony in the case against don Domingo, it is evident that the Zapotec lord felt powerful enough to instruct lesser-ranking indigenous nobles and to command humble subjects. He failed, however, to remember that his subjects expected him to fulfill certain obligations as a ruler. Furthermore, he abused his role as tax collector, committing a very serious crime against the Spanish Crown. On September 30, 1579, a *licenciado* named Salgado, *fiscal* in the case against Don Domingo, recommended that the governor and his accomplices be placed in jail, where they were to await their sentences.³⁷ Don Domingo was not wealthy or

³⁷ AGN Civil Expediente 822 foja, 339r. “El licenciado Salgado [?] fiscal en la causa contra Don Domingo gobernador de Tlacolula y los demás sus consortes sobre los tributos que con el hurtaron en la cual dijo que la causa esta con la y vista y conviene para la pronunciación de las sentencias el dicho gobernador y consortes se pongan en la Real cárcel para en ella oír las dichas sentencias. Suplico a Vuestra Alcaldía mande que los susodichos se pongan en la dicha cárcel...”

powerful enough to appease the colonial officials who sought to recover taxes owed to the Crown.

Don Domingo waited for the outcome of his petitions in a prison in Antequera, while the attorney hired to represent him before the *Real Audiencia* sought his pardon and release. The *cacique's* attorney pleaded that his client was old, poor and had many needs.³⁸ On December 7, 1576, Baltazar de Rivera appeared before a judge to plead his client's case.³⁹ The acting judge granted the temporary release of don Domingo while the court officials conducted the investigation called a *probanza*, in order to determine the next steps in the case.⁴⁰ Apparently, don Domingo returned to Tlacolula following his release. Finally, the Spanish officials and the two interpreters, Francisco Martín, who was a Spaniard, and Juan Pérez, an indigenous man, visited the *queche* of Tlacolula with a decree that the 140 couples whom don Domingo had hidden from the tribute rolls were to come forward and provide a declaration of the facts.⁴¹

The officials interrogated don Domingo de Mendoza, who answered through an interpreter assigned by the court. The Zapotec lord's answers were cautious. He maintained his innocence, framing his actions in terms of local traditions. According to the court details, when the *cacique* was asked about the missing tributaries, he only mentioned forty, not one hundred and forty, and added that he did not collude or request that his *tequitlatos* hide the said married

³⁸ AGN: Civil Expediente 822, foja 98r.

³⁹ AGN Civil Expediente 822, foja 98r. "Balthazar de Ribera en nombre de Gaspar de Agüilár so parezco [ante mí] Vuestra Merced y digo que [el dicho mi cliente] a muchos días que está preso y sin culpa como Vuestra Merced [V.M.] le constara por los descargos que va dando Por Vuestra Majestad pido con pena servido mandarlo soltar de la dicha prisión confiado por tanto que es hombre pobre y Viejo y padece mucha necesidad..."

⁴⁰ AGN Civil Expediente 822, foja 99r.

⁴¹ AGN Civil Expediente 822, foja 223r.

couples.⁴² Don Domingo declared that he was in Teitipac when Pedro de Navarrete went to Tlacolula to take the census, but he did not say exactly what he was doing there.⁴³ When he was examined about the alleged damage to agricultural lands belonging to the queche's commoners, he declared that the community received many benefits from his *estancia de ganado menor*, including meat, wool and cheese that the community sold in the market.⁴⁴ The cacique testified that proceeds from the sale of cheese, wool and meat went to the *caja de la comunidad* (community treasury), and that the tequitlatos and mayordomos of the town council could confirm this assertion. He went so far as to claim that ornaments for the church were purchased from the *caja de la comunidad*, and that the local vicar could attest to this fact. He even claimed to have purchased some of the church decorations. By referring to the involvement of other lords in activities that benefitted the greater community, he suggested that his actions not only conformed to local customs and practices, but also benefitted colonial officials and the church.

Don Domingo alluded to the tradition of *guelaguetza* in explaining how he organized feasts for the patron saint, which benefitted Spaniards, priests, and indigenous lords who attended these celebrations. In reply to the claim that he had stolen the kill of the community's collective hunt, he argued that he was only following custom. According to the cacique, in August, when the patron saint was to be celebrated, the queche customarily contributed to the festivities by *willingly* providing resources for the feast. He boasted how he had managed to feed so many people, with the help of the pueblo, who contributed to the feasts. He pointed out that Spanish officials, a vicar, and other Spaniards came to his pueblo for the patron saint's feast

⁴² AGN Civil Expediente 822, foja 126v.

⁴³ As previously mentioned, Don Domingo was in Teitipac's jail because he had been accused of idolatry.

⁴⁴ AGN Civil Expediente 822, foja 126v. "Yten que si sabe de todos los aprovechamientos de su estancia de Ganado menor que la comunidad deste dicho pueblo ytem que es lana, carnero y queso y cabrito...dicho pueblo ha vendido lo procedido dello lo meten y han metido en la caja de la comunidad..."

day, thanks to this custom. He said: “[the queche] has a custom of hunting for rabbits and jackrabbits and birds for the celebration of the advocacy of this pueblo, which is a day in the month of August, and they give to the vicar and corregidores of this said pueblo part of the hunt that they bring, and if there is anything left, they [give it] to feed the Spaniards and principales who come to said *fiesta*.”⁴⁵ The cacique was careful to frame his behavior as the leader of an important Zapotec queche in the context of his people's cultural practices, which benefitted the Spaniards who sought to tax them.

The proceedings revealed that each *barrio* in the queche had tequitlatos who were in charge of keeping the tribute lists up-to-date, making note of those who had moved away or died and those who had become eligible of paying tribute due to age or status, as in the case of people who were married. They also declared that the tribute was collected on a quarterly basis and delivered to don Domingo. Thus the tequitlatos were responsible for keeping records of the barrio residents and attending don Domingo's meetings, which took place in prominent places around the queche, including the cacique's house and the church. But the witnesses stated that the *pèniquèche* were not bound to any one particular barrio, that people moved around, settled in other places, and traveled to nearby queche. Moving from one barrio to another was commonplace, apparently.

Común y República de Tlacolula

The común y república of Tlacolula represented the inhabitants of the queche who were not necessarily elites. The *pèniquèche* were men and women who lived in the community and

⁴⁵ AGN Civil Expediente 822, foja 127r. “Tienen por costumbre de ir a caza de Conejos liebres y pájaros para la fiesta es la vocación deste pueblo que es el día del mes de agosto y la caza que traen parte de ella dan al vicario y corregidores deste dicho pueblo y si alguno queda la [descocan] para dar de comer a los españoles e indios principales... que vienen y se hayan en la dicha fiesta.”

performed daily functions for the good of the *queche* and its households. Some of these individuals were trade specialists: weavers, cotton makers, shoemakers, midwives, chocolate makers, vendors in the local market, medical specialists. The *común y república* included those who made jewelry, masons, sheep herders, and everyone engaged in agricultural work on a daily basis.

There is a general consensus among historians about the negative environmental impact of the introduction of sheep in many parts of the Americas.⁴⁶ But by 1576, Oaxacan communities, individuals, *cofradías* and *caciques* acquired and bred sheep as sources of income and markers of status. The *totálea* (herder) who herded sheep was responsible for taking the animals to water sources and pasture, while ensuring that they did not damage property, especially agricultural lands.⁴⁷ Ignoring basic rules of respect for private property could result in costly legal battles, especially if sheep crossed *queche* boundaries and damaged lands that belonged to neighboring communities.⁴⁸ Spaniards, the church, *caciques*, and entire communities owned hundreds of herds of sheep in and around the Central Valleys. When the traveler Thomas Gage described the riches of the Central Valleys on his way to Guatemala, he wrote: “[t]he valley is of at least fifteen miles in length, and ten in breadth, where runneth in the midst a goodly river yielding great stores of fish. The Valley is full of sheep and other cattle, which yield much wool to the clothiers of the City of Angels (Puebla), stores of hides to the merchants of Spain,

⁴⁶ Several important studies analyze the impact that sheep had in the Americas. For example, Elinor G. K. Melville, *A Plague of Sheep: Environmental Consequences of the Conquest of Mexico* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

⁴⁷ C304v: “Pastor ser asi, vide criar. Totálea, tozàchaya.”

⁴⁸ For an example of the legal battles involving the trampling of livestock over community boundaries see Kevin Terraciano “Writing to the Rescue: How a Zapotec Community Used Native-Language Documents to Defend its Lands”. In *Tradition and Innovation in Mesoamerican Cultural History*, ed. by Roberto Cantú and Aaron Sonnenschein. Lincom Studies in Anthropology, 16. Munich: Lincom Europa, 2011. Also see Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca*, 340, and on the impact of livestock introduction to the Americas, 362-63.

and great provision of flesh to the city of Oaxaca, and to all the towns about, which are exceeding rich, and do maintain many cloisters of friars, and churches with stately furniture belonging to them....”⁴⁹ Don Domingo was a *pénihuetalelào* (livestock owner) who depended on the *pèniquèche* to care for his herds as part of their *tequio* service to the lord.⁵⁰ But he declined to admit that his herds caused damage to neighboring fields.

If it is clear from testimonies elicited in the course of the hearings that don Domingo depended on the collective efforts of the *guelaguetza* system for his own sustenance and enrichment, it is unclear how the community benefitted from its cacique and his circle of associates. According to the *pèniquèche*, Don Domingo held many banquets and drunken feasts that were made possible by community labor and goods, including game killed during communal hunting trips. Representatives of the community declared, “during the Easter season and the [other] feast days of the pueblo, the said Don Domingo collects cacao for wine and distributes everything in his house, where it is consumed as he sees fit, for which he is committing a crime.”⁵¹ The indigenous lords and Spaniards, including the vicar, feasted from the labor and resources of the community, organized through the *guelaguetza* system. The *pèniquèche* included this complaint against the cacique because he failed to give back to them, in the reciprocal spirit that defined the institution of *guelaguetza*. The lord was aware of his failure, but he attempted to divert responsibility by focusing on expenses caused by the Spaniards.

As a “común y república de naturales”, the *pèniquèche* complained that don Domingo and his *tequitlatos* were often drunk at the local *cantina* or don Domingo’s house, where *tequio*

⁴⁹ Gage and Newton, *Thomas Gage, the English-American*, 120.

⁵⁰ C304v: “Pastor que cria ganados dueño dellos. Pénihuetalelào, huezácha, cocóomàni.”

⁵¹ AGN: Civil Expediente 822, foja 8v. “Item que todas las pascuas y fiestas de el pueblo el dicho don Domingo hace derramas y recoge cacao para vino y todo ello distribuye en su casa y se consume en lo que a él le parece por lo cual comete delito.”

workers fermented his *pulque*. The witnesses declared, “Don Domingo always goes to the cantina and is drunk out of his senses. He will carry on with everything while drunk. And the pulque that he and other natives consume in his house, they take without paying for it. The pulque with which they inebriate themselves is made in his house, and thus all the *macehuales* (Náhuatl word for commoners) and principales go about drunk in his house, and they are not punished.”⁵²

The tequitlatos in Don Domingo’s cabildo served as surrogate leaders when don Domingo was absent from the community or too drunk to function. In addition to the daily affairs of the *queche*, the cabildo interacted with Spanish officials, included their corregidor and the Dominican friars. Surely the tequitlatos and the *escribano* convened to record the business of the *queche* and the many ways in which *pèniquèche* participated in the functioning of local affairs. In addition there were constant travelers passing through the region who stopped for provisions or lodging.⁵³

When it came time for Don Domingo to testify in the proceedings, the case was prolonged for at least two months because the interpreters chosen by the Real Audiencia were not acceptable to both sides. The first interpreter, described as a speaker of the Mexican language (Náhuatl), was a “good friend” of Don Domingo and thus was not trusted by representatives of the pueblo to translate everything faithfully.⁵⁴ In turn, don Domingo rejected

⁵² AGN: Civil Expediente 822, foja 8v. “Item que el dicho don Domingo siempre va la cantina y esta borracho fuera de tino y todas las cosas yebare el estando borracho y el pulque que assi gasta en su casa el de los naturales y lo llevan sin pagarlo y en su casa se hace el dicho pulque con que se emborracha y assi todos los *macehuales* están en su casa asi principales andan borrachos no se castigan.”

⁵³ Those travelers included friars, settlers finding their way towards southern cities or foreigners, such as Thomas Gage.

⁵⁴ AGN Civil, Expediente 822, foja 63r. “Digo que a mi ha venido noticia que nombro por interprete para examinar a los testigos que presentaren para averiguación de dichos capítulos a Francisco Martin interprete en la lengua mexicana... y no saber la lengua zapoteca”

the second interpreter named Alonso de Durán with an official petition, signed by the governor himself, who declared “I presented before your majesty a petition not to proceed in the questioning of witnesses with Diego de Durán because he is not a Zapotec-speaker, but he is of the Mixtec nation, and that the *probanza* (investigation) should be recorded with the service of a skilled and expert speaker who can determine what the witnesses are saying.”⁵⁵

Finally on September 4, 1576, two native language interpreters relayed the orders of the court to the witnesses from Tlacolula and Don Domingo de Mendoza.⁵⁶ The questioning of witnesses went on for over two months, a process that continued on November 27, 1576 with an official order to verify the identity of the one hundred and forty hidden tributaries, and to question them.⁵⁷ The Zapotec witnesses spoke through an interpreter. The Spanish officials began with the first witness described as, “Tomás Pérez, Indio, 26, no” referring to the man’s name, ethnicity, age and marital status. He answered the seventeen *capítulos* set forth in the document delivered to the Real Audiencia. The court hoped to account for the 140 Zapotecs who had escaped the survey by Pedro Navarrete, the Spanish *corregidor*, who was in charge of taking the tribute census in Tlacolula.

⁵⁵ AGN Civil, Expediente 822, foja 64r.

⁵⁶ Francisco Martín was the Nahuatl-Spanish interpreter chosen by the *juzgado* on behalf of the *alcalde mayor* and Tomás Pérez was the Zapotec-Náhuatl interpreter.

⁵⁷ AGN Civil, Expediente 822, foja 74r.

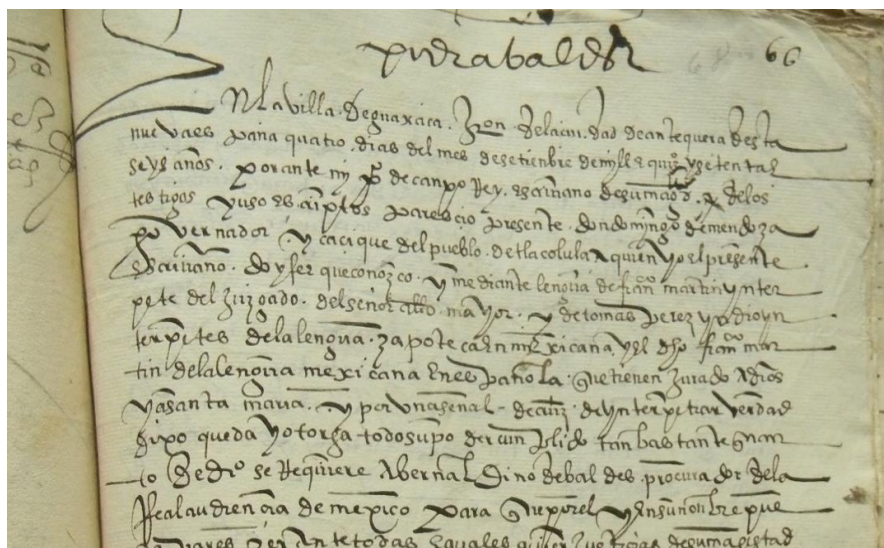


Figure 4.2. 1576, Tlacolula. "Francisco Martín, interprete en lengua mexicana y española." AGN Civil Expediente 822 Foja 60r.

The Royal Officials who visited Tlacolula on December 13, 1576 to question the unreported tributaries reported that some Zapotecs appeared before the Spaniards who waited with the interpreters at their side, but others refused to report to the officials.⁵⁸ There was a great deal of confusion. Some people who had been counted and who had paid tribute ended up entering the investigative record as unreported tributaries. Some of those individuals were widows or widowers who had been included in the original census by Pedro de Navarrete and who had paid the tribute as married couples when their spouses were alive.⁵⁹ The officials proceeded by taking down the names of all the people who appeared and, in the end, failed to account for all the 140 missing tributaries. They did manage, however, to record the names of 61 Zapotec couples and some unmarried people who had not been accounted for by Pedro Navarrete. The Spaniards also noted their barrios of residence and the tequitlatos who presided over those barrios, including: two couples from the barrio of Talala led by Francisco López; two

⁵⁸ AGN Civil Expediente 822, foja 121v.

⁵⁹ AGN Civil Expediente 822, foja 121v.

from the barrio of Toyope led by Cristóbal Velasco; five couples from the barrio of Quique led by Diego Velázquez; six couples from the barrio de Lachibitico led by [Alonso] Quala; five couples from the barrio of Loyose led by Tomás de Aquino; and another three couples in a barrio [its name is unreadable due to damage to the document] led by Juan Pérez.⁶⁰ Alonso Hernández, an eighty-year-old Zapotec witness who had been a tequitlato when the census was taken, declared that the barrios did not contain many houses, but the houses in each barrio were large enough for extended families.⁶¹ He declared that it was his duty to hide five of the couples in his barrio named Quaxoba, and that Domingo Quegueche, Tomas Yopi, Domingo Quiguie, Thomas Pila, and Juan Qualo were all married and alive and had always paid their tribute to don Domingo.⁶² The witnesses admitted that the money had been collected from these hidden tributaries, but that they were unsure of what happened to it. Obviously, these declarations damaged the cacique's case.

At the same time, many *pèniqùèche* clearly feared Don Domingo and refused to identify themselves to Spanish officials. Those people who did appear testified that many others remained absent because they feared don Domingo's wrath: "Many of the tequitlatos who hid the said Indians do not allow them to appear to provide their testimony; the Indians are hiding and remain in hiding because they are scared of Don Domingo...."⁶³ The Zapotecs who appeared to testify were asked about those who were still missing, but they responded that they had no

⁶⁰ AGN Civil Expediente 822, foja 121v.

⁶¹ AGN Civil Expediente 822, foja 203v.

⁶² AGN Civil Expediente 822, foja 203v.

⁶³ AGN Civil Expediente 822, foja 122r. "Muchos de los tequitlatos que escondieron los dichos indios no [os han] parecer para hacer la manifestacion dellos, y los indios escondidos se esconden y ausentan de miedo y temor del dicho don Domingo...."

knowledge of such people, and thus could not help the Royal Officials.⁶⁴ Acknowledging that there were too many people who were unaccounted for in this initial investigation, the Spanish officials demanded that don Domingo provide them with a list of the people who remained unaccounted for.⁶⁵

On the same day, December 13, 1576, a Zapotec lord named don Fernando appeared to sign a declaration that he and his tequitlatos had ‘manifested’ the missing tribute payers.⁶⁶ He governed over an unnamed "parcialidad...[de éste] pueblo", one of Tlacolula’s barrios and declared: “Don Fernando, cacique and principal of this pueblo, and his principales and tequitlatos, before your majesty, have revealed the Indians whom don Domingo de Mendoza had kept in seclusion and hiding....”⁶⁷ The presence of another don who called himself cacique and possessed his own tequitlatos, who was eager to enter the record as someone who proudly defied don Domingo and sought Spanish favor, indicates the existence of a powerful faction in the community that may have propelled the case forward against don Domingo. He demanded that the courts should apply the rigor of the law by, “ordering that [don Domingo and his principales and tequitlatos] should be placed in jail” until all the missing tribute payers were apprehended.⁶⁸ At the end of that same day, don Domingo’s tequitlatos appeared before Matheo de Monrazar,

⁶⁴ AGN Civil Expediente 822, foja 122r.

⁶⁵ AGN Civil, Expediente 822, foja 122r.

⁶⁶ AGN Civil, Expediente 822, foja 122r.

⁶⁷ AGN Civil, Expediente 822, foja 125r. “Don Fernando cacique y principal deste pueblo y sus principales y tequitlatos han manifestado ante vuestra merced los indios que tenia ocultos y escondidos Don Domingo de Mendoza....”

⁶⁸ AGN Civil Expediente 822, foja 125r.

the *Juez de Comisión*, and declared that all the missing people had appeared, and that they did not know the location of any others.⁶⁹

Meanwhile, the queche was buzzing with activity. Many people feared being questioned by the Spanish officials. On December 14, 1576, the court officers continued to search for the missing tributaries. In attempting to answer their questions, many people offered incidental information about the everyday activities of the queche. More couples came forward: four married couples from the barrio of Cozaa, led by Gaspar de AGüilár; three married couples from the barrio of Lozaa, led by Francisco López; four married couples from the barrio Tequitlato, led by “tio” Alonso [Hernández]; two married couples from the barrio of Chinaqui led by Cristóbal Caballero; five married couples from the barrio of Quiocacha, led by Diego Vásquez.⁷⁰ But the number of missing people remained incomplete.

⁶⁹ AGN Civil Expediente 822, foja 125v.

⁷⁰ AGN Civil Expediente 822, foja 123r.

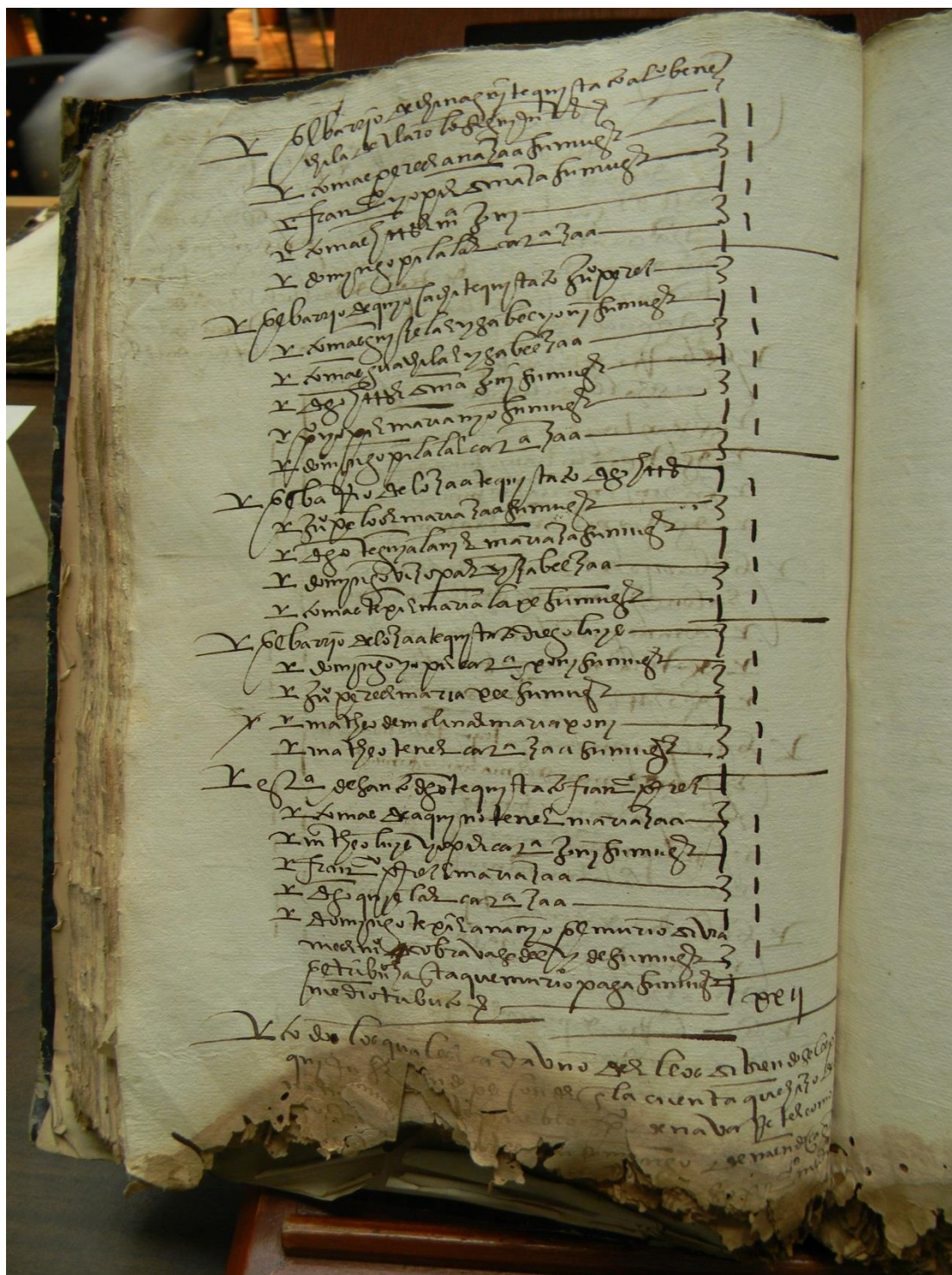


Figure 4.3. Tlacolula 1576. Married couples who were not counted in the official tribute rolls, who came forward to declare their tribute payment to don Domingo de Mendoza. AGN Civil, Expediente 822, foja 123r.

The officials continued to search for the missing tribute payers in the following days: four married couples from the barrio of Chinaqui, led by Alonso Bene; five married couples in the barrio of Quiolacha, led by Juan Pérez; four married couples in the barrio of Cozaa, led by Diego [Hernández]; four married couples in the barrio of Cozaa, led by Diego Laye; five married couples from the barrio of the Santo, led by Francisco Pérez, where one couple declared that they had paid half of the tribute. At the end of this investigation, the number of missing tribute payers did not add up to one hundred and forty. Some of the people unaccounted for included individuals who had died, moved away after marriage, or moved from Tlacolula for unknown reasons. Others simply could not be found.

The Case Against don Domingo

Don Domingo's power did not deter the *pèniqùèche* from denouncing their cacique and governor to the Real Audiencia.⁷¹ The court notary wrote, "The Indians of the pueblo of Tlacolula in this province, presented before us certain charges against don Domingo, gobernador of the said pueblo, including insults, injuries, and disturbances which the accused had caused them during the time he held the office of gobernador, and how he had hidden one-hundred and forty tribute paying Indians in order to rob the tribute that they were supposed to pay, how some principales of the said pueblo helped, and how they [the Indians] requested and begged that we go there to investigate and punish the crimes and excesses that he had committed."⁷² The *coqui's*

⁷¹ AGN: Civil Expediente 822.

⁷² AGN Civil 822, foja 73v. "Los indios del pueblo de Tlacolula desta provincia presentaron ante nos ciertos capitulos contra Don Domingo gobernador del dicho pueblo en los cuales so contienen algunos agravios bejaciones y molestias que el susodicho les habia fecho durante el tiempo que avia usado y usaba el dicho cargo de gobernador y haber ocultado en las cuentas que del dicho pueblo se habían hecho siento y cuarenta indios tributarios para defraudarnos los tributos que nos debían pagar por lo cual le avian dado favor y ayuda algunos principales del dicho pueblo y nos pidieron y suplicaron mandásemos se le tomasen residencia para que satisficiese y las partes agraviadas los daños que se les habian fecho y se castigasen de sus delitos y excesos...."

crimes were reduced to seventeen charges (using the term *capítulo* to refer to individual questions concerning charges), which became the basis for the proceeding's interrogations.

Acting like a supreme lord, Don Domingo took the spoils of the communal hunt as if it were tribute owed by to him by his subjects.⁷³ Gift exchange among the elite and the *pèniqùèche* was a prevalent practice among Mesoamerican societies. However, the hunt was not a gift designated for don Domingo. Rather, he sent his *tequitlatos* to demand the meat from the kill. The *tequitlatos* were lower-ranking elites who relied on Don Domingo's position as governor for access to prominent positions on the *cabildo* and access to the labor and tribute from the *pèniqùèche*. Thus the governor's justification for sending *tequitlatos* to demand the fruits of the hunt was that the animals had been caught on communal lands. Members of the *queche* declared, "when the natives go out hunting for deer or jack rabbits, or rabbits or fowl and other [animals], he takes it all home without paying a thing for them, so that everything in the said *pueblo* is for him, he takes it all and profits in the end."⁷⁴ In ancient times, the *principales* who collected tribute for the lord would have perhaps recorded the gifts and their givers before presenting a part of the hunt to the lord; in this case, don Domingo's *tequitlatos* appear to have overstepped tradition in appropriating all of the hunt for the *cacique*.⁷⁵

Whereas the Spanish officials focused on don Domingo's alleged crime of tribute evasion, the community's most prominent complaint involved the lord's abuse of the

⁷³ This exchange was offered on many occasions, such as when Nahuas presented gifts to Axayacatl after the celebration of his auto-sacrifice to Huitzilopochtli: "...llegaron los principales de Tacuba, y en pos de ellos vinieron los de los pueblos de Tzauhyucan, Chichicauhtla y Huitzitzilapan, y como monteros, trajeron estos naturales de los montes sus presentes de tigres, leones, lobos, onzas, coctochtli, lobos pardos, (cuetlachcoyotl), raposas, coyotes, venados, liebres y Conejos, todos vivos y enjaulados..." Alvarado Tezozómoc, *Crónica mexicana*, 46.

⁷⁴ AGN: Civil Expediente 822, foja 8v. "Item que dicho don Domingo al tiempo que salen a caza los naturales assi de venados como de liebres y conejos y pajara y otras cosas se lo lleva todo a su casa sin por ellos les paga cosa alguna de manera que todo de dicho pueblo le sirve y se lleva todo lo aprovecha mientras que hay."

⁷⁵ John K. Chance, *Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1978), 25.

guelaguetza system. The constant references in this case to the collective labor and goods that were to be enjoyed by the entire queche confirms the importance of this Zapotec tradition of guelaguetza. Although the Spanish-language documentation of the case does not refer specifically to the word "guelaguetza" (it does not refer to any Zapotec words except names for barrios), all of the witnesses and even don Domingo himself described the organization of feasts and labor that enabled the queche to function as it did. Testimony about wedding preparations for the lord's children is perhaps the most recognizable form of the institution. Several of the witnesses declared that the gifts were given "in the tradition of this region." But witnesses also complained that when one of his children was married, the *cacique* demanded woven cotton goods and one peso. One witness declared: "every time that he has married off sons or daughters he has demanded one peso and one manta from each Indian of the pueblo in order to celebrate the said wedding."⁷⁶ Traditionally, people participated in *guelaguetza* and *tequio* willingly, or they were obligated as members of their society to participate. Regular participation ensured the equal costs and benefits of reciprocal obligation. Refusing to reciprocate any *guelaguetza* exchange could alienate an individual within in his own community. Among other reported abuses, don Domingo had failed to respect guelaguetza rules and was forced to face the consequences, before the entire community.

Don Domingo's case is extraordinary because it shows how his position of power enabled him to abuse the Zapotec system based on mutual obligation. One witness declared: "It was about three years ago when don Domingo hid forty tributary couples from the colonial census; these couples were made to pay seven reales and a half [less than the official tax

⁷⁶ AGN: Civil Expediente 822, foja 8v. "Item que el dicho don Domingo todas las veces que a casado hijos o hijas a hecho derramas por el dicho pueblo de a peso y una manta de cada indio para celebrar la fiesta del dicho casamiento."

collected by colonial officials] because they were working the communal lands.”⁷⁷ According to more than one witness, around 1567 (about five to ten years before 1576), don Domingo had ordered men to beat Matheo Luis and Tomás de la Plaza, a father and his son, respectively. The witnesses remembered that Matheo Luis (the father) died as a result of the terrible beating that he had received on don Domingo's order. They declared that Matheo was punished for refusing to work the communal lands. One witness stated that "a maize sementera of one hundred brazas is worked by groups of people each year, and he [don Domingo] has paid them nothing for their work. And because an Indian [named] Tomás did not want to work his sementera, about nine or ten years ago, he [don Domingo] beat and whipped the said Tomás, who died from it.”⁷⁸ Other witnesses testified that in exchange for a reduced tribute payment of seven pesos per married couple, don Domingo mandated that they work the said sementera. When he hid the 140 married tributaries from Spanish officials, he sought to collect a "discounted" tribute from those couples who provided tequio service on communal lands, whose harvest he monitored through his tequitlatos. From the Zapotec tributaries' perspective, the fact that they received a discounted tax rate in exchange for tequio on communal lands had two clear benefits: they fulfilled their civic *guelaguetza* obligations (regardless of the beneficiary), and they paid less money.

The motives for those who testified in support of don Domingo, about a dozen people in all, are obscure.⁷⁹ As the case unfolded, even don Domingo's supporters revealed information that damaged the cacique's case. Apparently, the sheep belonging to the governor's private

⁷⁷ AGN Civil, Expediente 822, foja 203.

⁷⁸ AGN Civil Expediente 822, foja 8v. “Item que se hacen una sementera de cien brazas en cuadra cada año de maiz, y no les ha pagado cosa alguna de su trabajo a los naturales y porque un indio Tomas no quiso ir a labrar su sementera abra nueve años poco mas o menos y le dio de palos y [azotes] de los cuales el dicho tomas murio...”

⁷⁹ The challenge in counting those who testified in support of don Domingo is that despite their positive descriptions of the Zapotec cacique as an “old man” and “good Christian”, his supporters often included information that damaged his claim of innocence.

estate were allowed to roam onto surrounding agricultural lands, causing all sorts of damage. In fact, the lands of Matheo Luis and Tomás de la Plaza, father and son, were trampled by don Domingo's sheep. According to the witnesses, the father and son complained to the corregidor when the sheep had destroyed their fields, undermining their ability to pay the royal tribute, and don Domingo was fined for the damage. Domingo Hernández Bayo appeared in support of the governor to testify that it was the corregidor, not don Domingo, who had Matheo and Tomás beaten. He claimed that "Luis Alonso de Lugo was the *corregidor* who found out that the Indians had demanded compensation for the damage in a malicious manner...for which Matheo Luis and Tomás de la Plaza and each received twelve lashes...but it was never Don Domingo who had them beaten, but [rather] it was the *corregidor*..."⁸⁰

⁸⁰ AGN Civil 822 foja, 352v. "El dicho Domingo Hernandez Bayo dijo que habra cinco años mas o menos que siendo Corregidor en este pueblo de Tlacolula Luis Alonso de Lugo trujeron un mandamiento un Matheo Luis y Thomas de la plaza para que don Domingo les pagara cierto daño que le habian hecho sus ovejas y en efecto el dicho don Domingo pago el dicho daño que fueron trece tomines y despues Luis Alonso de Lugo que era corregidor averiguo que el daño lo avian pedido maliciosamente estos indios por lo cual delante de este testigo y de otras muchas personas lo averiguo y alli luego mando azotar los dichos indios Matheo Luis y Thomas de la Plaza y les dieron a cada uno doce azotes y ansi se fueron y nunca el dicho don Domingo los mando azotar sino el dicho Corregidor como tiene y que esto responde a la pregunta."

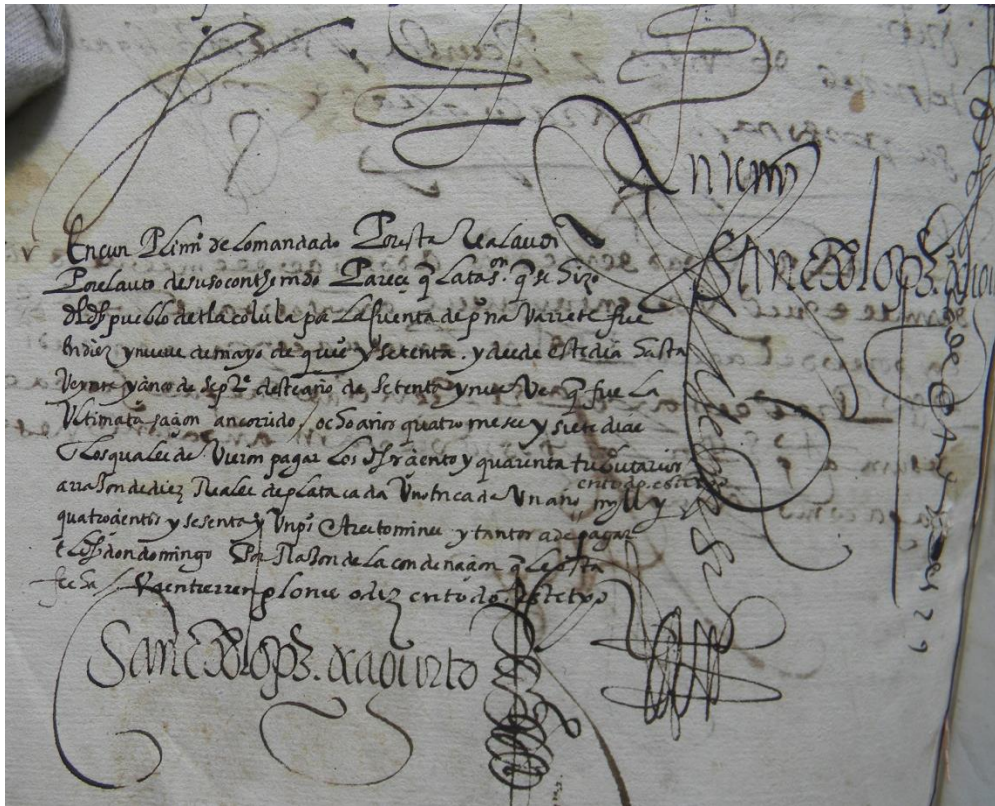


Figure 4.4. 1579 Punishment. The Court fines don Domingo. AGN Civil 822, Foja 358v.

Conclusion: The Cacique's Punishment

Despite the many alleged crimes committed by don Domingo that harmed his community's welfare and governance, royal officials adjudicating the legal suit focused on the cacique's principal crime against the crown--tax evasion and embezzlement of funds that were destined for the crown.⁸¹ As the highest-ranking indigenous representative of Tlacolula, don Domingo de Mendoza was responsible for the annual collection of ten pesos in tribute from the eligible residents of his *común y república*.⁸² Don Domingo's breach of this colonial obligation would ultimately result in a judgment against him and his personal possessions. On September 25, 1579, the Real Audiencia in Mexico city sentenced don Domingo de Guzmán, governor of

⁸¹ AGN Civil, Expediente 822, foja 102.

⁸² AGN Civil, Experiencia 822, foja 1.

Tlacolula, to pay 1,461 pesos and 3 tomines back to “his majesty and his royal officials” for each of the 140 tributaries that he had hidden from colonial officials for more than seven years.⁸³ The amount of money was a fortune for anyone in this period, Spanish or indigenous.

The case of don Domingo presents a magnificent example of how an insider, in this case a Zapotec cacique and governor of Tlacolula, abused the time-honored *guelaguetza* system for his own personal benefit. Don Domingo lorded it over the commoners, punishing those who complained or failed to fulfill his demands. From the pueblo's perspective, the consequences of his offenses were severe: he had deprived many people of their sustenance; he had robbed the community of its food; he had humiliated people by beating them in public; and he had even killed a man.

Despite the fact that don Domingo had ruled without major incident for many years in his home community, and that he had learned to negotiate and communicate with Spanish officials, priests, elites from nearby communities, and members of his own *queche*, the cacique was in the end brought down by those who knew him best. The community could not tolerate the cacique's repeated failure to give in the same way as he had received. In the end, the community resorted to involving Spanish authorities to expose and humiliate don Domingo and his *tequitlatos* for abusing the *guelaguetza* system that they were expected to uphold and protect.

⁸³ Archivo General de la Nación, Civil 822 Foja 358 v.

CHAPTER 5

The Enduring Legacy of Guelaguetza

*"Guelaguetza and Tu Chha'ia: A Zapotec Perspective of What Others Call Friendship."
Idea inspired by Don Pablo from Santa Cruz Yagavila, Oaxaca.*

Title for a journal article in the Palgrave International Handbook of Peace Studies.¹

The ancient guelaguetza sharing system continues to play a vital role in many contemporary Zapotec communities, despite many changes over the last five centuries. The ability of communities to adapt the system to changing needs and demands is one of the reasons why those communities continue to exist as they do. The system's three forms--gift exchange (guelaguetza), labor (tequio), and service (cargos)--continue to organize social relations and activities among Zapotec households.² Guelaguetza has proven to be a very useful, practical system. The enduring legacy of guelaguetza is the spirit of cooperation found in indigenous communities, which continues to exist today.³

Guelaguetza exchanges continued to occur in Central Valley Zapotec communities after Mexico declared independence from Spain. Thirty years after Mexico's War of Independence, in 1851, a mayordomo named don Joaquín Carranza, from the Hacienda of Xagaa, appeared before

¹ Inspired by Don Pablo from Santa Cruz Yagavila, Oaxaca. Esteva, Gustavo, and Arturo Guerrero. "Guelaguetza and Tu Chha'ia: A Zapotec Perspective of What Others Call Friendship." *The Palgrave International Handbook of Peace Studies: A Cultural Perspective*, 2011, 352–72.

² Archivo Historico Judicial, Seccion: Tlacolula, Serie: Criminal, Legajo 6, Expediente 7, Año 1851, fojas 9.

³ Oaxacan migrants in the United States honor this spirit and organize around these principles. For example, a community magazine published online in Spanish by the Frente Indígena de Organizaciones Binacionales under Oaxacan leadership is called *Tequio*. See, fiob.org.

Mitla's cabildo to declare that some of his sheep had been stolen.⁴ The report included a description of the animals that were taken, including one sheep that had been paid back to him from a *guelaguetza* exchange.⁵ Several decades later, in 1920, a 30-year-old woman named Feliciana Bernardina, who made her living as a 'molendera' (grinding foodstuffs on a metate) in Santa Cruz Papalutla, reported to authorities in Tlacolula that her house had been burglarized.⁶ Someone broke into her home when she was away at a little fiesta (*fiestecita*). The stolen goods included four red *jícaras* (gourds), silver coins, and a manta (large piece of linen). The thief also stole valuable documents, including Feliciana's property records, sale receipts from two bulls, and a "memoria de *guelaguetza*" (a written record of *guelaguetza* exchanges).⁷ The *memoria de guelaguetza* would have included all the debts owed and paid by her family over the course of many years. These indirect, incidental references to the *guelaguetza* system in the archival record betray the great significance of the system to Zapotec society. The examples demonstrate, however, that people continued to practice *guelaguetza* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Changes may have affected the frequency of giving *guelaguetza* gifts, the types of items exchanged, and the terms of *tequio* or *cargos*, but not the concept itself.

While it is true that Zapotec documents rarely include the word "*guelaguetza*" because it was an internal indigenous system that did not need to be explained to outsiders, the existence of these documents verify the significance and longevity of the tradition. Furthermore, the archival records document that these transactions were valuable to the people who participated in these

⁴ Archivo Historico Judicial del Estado de Oaxaca, Seccion: Tlacolula, Serie: Criminal, Legajo 6, Expediente 7, Año 1851, fojas 9. I thank Luis Sánchez-López for sharing this record with me.

⁵ Archivo Historico Judicial del Estado de Oaxaca, Seccion: Tlacolula, Serie: Criminal, Legajo 6, Expediente 7, Año 1851, fojas 9.

⁶ Archivo Historico Judicial del Estado de Oaxaca. Seccion: Tlacolula, Serie: Criminal, Año 1920, 12 fojas.

⁷ Alphabetic writing allowed Zapotecs to have written records of their *guelaguetza* exchanges. These books continue to exist in today's Zapotec communities.

exchanges.⁸ The three forms of collaboration and exchange that constitute *guelaguetza* are not usually formally recognized in most cultures: gifts that do not need to be reciprocated, or labor that is gone unpaid, or service to the community that is provided without the requirement of reciprocity.⁹

Twentieth Century Transformations

In the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution of 1910, national institutions attempted to incorporate revolutionary social values.¹⁰ The nationalist sentiment advocated basic rights for indigenous people and rural *campesinos*. The *Indigenista* movement was born out of this historical context. In 1935, Alberto Vargas published a pamphlet explaining the *guelaguetza* festivities that took place at “El Cerro del Fortín” in Oaxaca City titled, *Guelaguetza, costumbre racial Oaxaqueña* (Guelaguetza, a Oaxacan racial tradition).¹¹ As an homage to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Mexican Revolution, the publication sought to triumph the Oaxacan spirit of

⁸ The word “costumbre” in the historical record has provoked interesting discussions around the indigenous people’s choice in applying this term to suit their needs. See Yannakakis’ Chapter, “‘Costumbre,’ A Language of Negotiation in Eighteenth Century Oaxaca,” in Ethelia Ruiz Medrano and Susan Kellogg, eds., *Negotiation within Domination: Colonial New Spain’s Indian Pueblos Confront the Spanish State* (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2010).

⁹ The following anthropological studies have focused on the question of the meaning of gifts in indigenous societies, unfortunately these studies tend to stress the “supernatural” ideology of gift-giving, rather than the practical, often reducing indigenous forms of gifts to religious transactions, rather than practical social behaviors in pre-capitalistic societies. See Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (London: Cohen & West, 1966); Emile Durkheim, *Primitive Classification* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963); Marcel Mauss, *Manual of Ethnography* (New York; Oxford: Durkheim Press/Berghahn Books, 2007); Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life a Study in Religious Sociology* (London: New York: G. Allen & Unwin; Macmillan, 1915); Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropology and Myth: Lectures, 1951-1982* (New York, NY, USA: Blackwell, 1987); Annette B. Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Alicia Barabas, *Dones, dueños y santos: ensayo sobre religiones en Oaxaca* (México, D.F.: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia: Miguel Angel Porrúa, 2006).

¹⁰ The Mexican Revolution is considered to be the first social revolution of the twentieth Century. Friedrich Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico: Europe, the United States, and the Mexican Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

¹¹ Alberto Vargas, *Guelaguetza; costumbre racial oaxaqueña*. (Oaxaca: Imprenta del Gobierno del Estado, 1935).

this celebration, which was described as a tradition “from time immemorial”. The celebration consisted of a meeting, attended by the elders of all of Oaxaca’s regions, who brought with them offerings from their native towns, such as flowers, machetes, food and music. The indigenous attendees exchanged stories, food and regional arts and crafts at the Cerro del Fortín, a prominent hill that overlooks the city of Oaxaca.¹² Today, most people think of the annual Guelaguetza celebration as a tradition of the past. But the event has now been commercialized and sold as a cultural commodity, and it has little to do with the Zapotec tradition of guelaguetza, despite its name.¹³

In 1947, Rogelio Barriga Rivas, a Oaxacan author born in Tlacolula de Matamoros, wrote about the tradition of guelaguetza in two novels. One of the novels is titled *Mayordomía*, the other *Guelaguetza*.¹⁴ The first novel, *Mayordomía*, inspired the film *Animas Trujano*, in which the Japanese actor, Toshiro Mifune, played a Zapotec man.¹⁵ The film, like the novel, criticized the Zapotec tradition of guelaguetza. According to Barriga Rivas, this “antiquated” tradition impoverished Zapotecs who sought local prestige by hosting large feasts that they could not afford. However, the novel does not provide sufficient context for the reader to understand that these large public feasts were the result of the guelaguetza network of exchange. Surely, a humble person who had only been able to provide tequio and had participated in only a few guelaguetza exchanges throughout the years would not have a large enough social network to

¹² For an excellent review of this process see Jesús Lizama Quijano, *La Guelaguetza en Oaxaca: fiesta, relaciones interétnicas y procesos de construcción simbólica en el contexto urbano* / J. Lizama Quijano; pról. de Joan J. Pujadas. (México: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social 2006).

¹³ Indigenous people are invited as performers for this festival, but they are no longer allowed to attend as they once did, in the spirit of sharing and exchanging regional goods and oral histories.

¹⁴ Rogelio Barriga Rivas, *Guelaguetza, Novela Oaxaqueña* (México: [Editorial Cortés, 1947]; Rogelio Barriga Rivas, *La Mayordomía. Novela*, 1. ed (México: Ediciones Botas, 1952).

¹⁵ Ismael Rodríguez Ruelas et al., *Ánimas Trujano el hombre importante* (Mexico: Películas Rodríguez, 1962).

organize a large feast for a patron saint. But a humble elderly person who provided *guelaguetza* in all three forms would certainly have the capacity to organize such a feast with the extended *guelaguetza* network that he or she had built over the course of a lifetime. It is likely that Barriga Rivas did not participate in the system and thus did not understand how the system operated.

As a system of mutual reliance and support, the Zapotec system might have seemed "backward" to many leaders of the Mexican Revolution. As the first Secretary of Education of the new government in 1921, José Vasconcelos, who was born in Oaxaca, sought to combat racist attitudes against indigenous people by promoting the newly formed public education system.¹⁶ However, this system emphasized Spanish-language instruction at the expense of indigenous languages, while promoting nationalist concepts such as *mestisaje*, which considered the "mestizo" of mixed blood to be superior to the Indian. Indigenous children were encouraged to attend public schools where they would become "gente de razón". The indigenous people who became "gente de razón" were distinguished from others in their communities by their western-style education, their rejection of indigenous traditions, and their command of the Spanish language.

Born in Tlacolula of Zapotec ancestry, Barriga-Rivas belonged to the "gente de razón" group. He moved to Oaxaca City, received an education, became a lawyer, and then moved to Mexico City. He distanced himself from his Zapotec community both physically and culturally, and ultimately wrote about the *guelaguetza* tradition which he describes in his novel as a "primitive and backwards" custom of the "Indians".¹⁷ His novels tend to cast the cultures of Oaxaca in a positive light, while posing local indigenous communities as problematic and

¹⁶ For an excellent study on the post-Revolutionary educational crusade led by Vasconcelos see, John Skirius, *José Vasconcelos y la cruzada de 1929* (México: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1978).

¹⁷ Rogelio Barriga Rivas, *La Mayordomía*, 9.

primitive. His two novels, *La Mayordomía* and *Guelaguetza*, criticize Zapotec traditions as he remembered them.¹⁸ He was especially critical of large feasts celebrated dedicated to saints and life-cycle events such as marriage or death. Typical of many anti-clerical Mexican intellectuals in the wake of the Mexican Revolution, he attacked traditions that were associated with the Church.

Even outsiders have commented on the tradition of *guelaguetza*.¹⁹ In 1954, Helen Augur published a travel account that reads like a casual ethnography. Augur penned her observations while traveling in the Central Valley, the Isthmus, and the Sierra regions. As she spent time in the community of Teotitlan del Valle, she reported on the Teotiteco's principal activities, such as weaving and agriculture. She also commented on the international connections that Teotitlan weavers had made as a result of their ancestral art. Augur spoke of a don Leopoldo, who "is living on a milpa which some remote ancestor was given after all the villagers cooperated in clearing the land...."²⁰ Augur's observation of villagers clearing land clearly refers to *guelaguetza* labor. In fact, Augur was aware that she had witnessed an important tradition. She continued:

It is not merely long tradition that makes the family and the town so orderly and harmonious, it is the Zapotec temperament... Even in the mountains where the soil is poor the Zapotecs belong to a town, and though they may build a hut on a holding far from the center and live in it while they raise a crop of corn, they do not abandon their citizenship or fail to respond when their town calls on them for

¹⁸ The first novel, *Mayordomía*, inspired the film *Animas Trujano*, which was nominated to the Golden Globes in 1962. See, Ismael Rodríguez Ruelas et al., *Animas Trujano el hombre importante* (Mexico: Películas Rodríguez, 1962).

¹⁹ The *guelaguetza* exchanges, while unnamed, did not go unnoticed in the following two studies: Charles M. Leslie, *Now We Are Civilized: A Study of the World View of the Zapotec Indians of Mitla, Oaxaca* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1960); Elsie Worthington Clews Parsons, *Mitla, Town of the Souls: And Other Zapoteco-Speaking Pueblos of Oaxaca, Mexico* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1936).

²⁰ Helen Augur, *Zapotec*. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1954), 65.

unpaid labor on a road or a public building. The pride and the social instincts of the Zapotecs are bound up in their town.²¹

Augur succeeded in defining a principal tie that binds Zapotec people to their communities. She did not mention the word *guelaguetza*, but her astute observations describe *guelaguetza* exchanges in which Zapotecs from Teotitlan provided "unpaid" labor to their neighbors or family members, and how people worked together for the collective benefit of their communities.²²

Despite institutional efforts to erase indigenous language, teachings and traditions, Zapotecs in the Central Valleys have continued to practice *guelaguetza*. Before their death, my maternal grandparents, who came from very humble Zapotec families, described their wedding feast. The celebration lasted seven days. Each day, family, friends and neighbors arrived with bundles of firewood, corn, sugar, eggs, and cacao. The godparents were expected to bring them a large metate, a large comal and a wooden chest to guard small valuables. All the gifts were brought before an altar and blessed by the hosting families. During the seven days of festivities, the guests participated in every aspect of the preparations. The women organized two groups: the younger ones led the grinding of corn for tortillas and the ingredients for the meals; the older women were in charge of preparing the feast, measuring, roasting, cleaning and tasting at every stage of the preparation. Collectively, they ensured that everyone in attendance was fed. The men were also divided into two groups: the younger ones fueled the fires for the tortillas and prepared the pyres for the evening (there was no electricity in the community); the older men carried the plates of food to the tables and offered every guest the ritual bundles of aromatic herbs called "poleo". Representatives from the groom and bride's families led the ritual speeches

²¹ Ibid., 66.

²² The topic of agricultural *guelaguetza* was studied in the early 1960s by Jorge Martínez Ríos, "Análisis Funcional de La 'Guelaguetza Agrícola' (Una Prueba Empírica Del Paradigma de Robert K. Merton)," *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 26, no. 1 (January 1, 1964): 79–125.

and agreed to the division of tasks. The celebration continued with the help of all the attendees who danced or drank at large communal tables. After the wedding celebrations were over, people arrived to collect anything that they had lent for the party. Every guest left the house with small gifts of food. The family recognized the many contributions and prepared to repay these in due time. Many of the symbols described in my grandparent's guelaguetza story appear in the genealogical registers of my pre-Columbian ancestors.

Transnational Zapotec Expressions of Collaboration and Exchange

During the Bracero movement of the 1940's, US companies recruited Zapotecs to travel to the United States.²³ Many *braceros* remembered the work involved in making the long journey and settling in a new land in terms of guelaguetza. When men migrated to work in agricultural fields in the US, they used the guelaguetza network to help family and community members. In the words of don Pablo, a Zapotec man from the Northern Sierra of Oaxaca, guelaguetza may be "that which others call friendship".²⁴

The best evidence for the maintenance of guelaguetza practices comes not from the distant past but from the lived present. In contemporary society, as indigenous communities are forced to adapt to globalized markets, Oaxaqueños continue to practice the reciprocal system of collaboration and exchange, in Mexico and the United States. Zapotecs have brought the tradition with them across the border. Oaxacans living in California have organized Guelaguetza

²³ Personal communication with braceros and children of braceros in the Central Valley pueblos, Andres Marcial (Tlacolula 1995), Luis Marcial (Tlacolula 2000), Antonio Aquino (Santa Ana del Valle 2005), Ignacio Santiago (Guila 2013), Zeferino Mendoza (Teotitlán 2013).

²⁴ Gustavo Esteva and Arturo Guerrero, "Guelaguetza and Tu Chha'ia: A Zapotec Perspective of What Others Call Friendship," *The Palgrave International Handbook of Peace Studies: A Cultural Perspective*, 2011, 352–72.

festivals for over 30 years.²⁵ In the United States, guelaguetza exchanges continue to fulfill many of the same functions as in Mexico: to help people host celebrations, or to provide aid in time of need. The exchanges create a network of voluntary household exchange and offer a measure of social security.

I have observed many Zapotecs in the United States who continue to safeguard the guelaguetza tradition in its three forms. Zapotecs who reside in the US often return to their pueblos to participate in the celebrations of patron saints. Sometimes Zapotecs return to their pueblos to serve mandatory cargos in their pueblo, especially if they plan on moving back to their native pueblo or if they hope to be buried there upon their death.²⁶ Others who wish to serve a cargo but cannot return to Oaxaca may hire a family member or other person to serve their cargo position in their place.²⁷

Despite the many global and national challenges that threaten to undermine indigenous cultural "usos y costumbres," I am pleased to report that my home community of Tlacolula and neighboring pueblos in the Central Valley continue to guard the guelaguetza tradition. I hope this dissertation provides enough historical context and original evidence to demonstrate the importance of guelaguetza to Zapotec men and women in the past, present, and future. It is a tradition that we learned from our grandparents, and should be taught to our children.

²⁵ Xochitl Chavez discusses how Oaxacans living in California organize around this cultural celebration in her dissertation titled, *Migrating Performative Traditions: The Guelaguetza Festival In Oaxacalifornia* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Santa Cruz, 2013).

²⁶ A new generation of Oaxacan scholars are currently developing doctoral dissertations on topics related to indigenous expressions of collaboration and exchange for several different regions including Brenda Nicolas UCLA Department of Chicana/o Studies (Sierra Norte), Daina Sanchez, UCI Department of Anthropology (Sierra Sur), Nataly Bautista, UCI Department of Anthropology (Valles Centrales), Luis Sanchez-López, UCSD Department of History (Valles Centrales), Jorge Ramirez UCSD Department of History (Triqui Region).

²⁷ This practice raises two fundamental issues: the degree of commitment that Zapotecs make to their pueblos, and the ways in which migration to the US has affected the social fabric of indigenous communities.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archives

AGI	Archivo General de las Indias, Seville, Spain
AGN	Archivo General de la Nación, México, D.F.
AGEO	Archivo General del Estado de Oaxaca, Oaxaca, México
AHJEO	Archivo Historico Judicial del estado de Oaxaca, Oaxaca, México
AMT	Archivo Municipal de Tlacolula de Matamoros, Tlacolula, Oaxaca
AHC	Archivo Histórico de Coyotepec, Coyotepec, Oaxaca, México

Primary and Secondary Sources

- Acuña, René. *Relaciones Geográficas Del Siglo XVI / Edición de René Acuña*. 1a ed. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, 1984.
- Agüero, Cristóbal de, and Junta Colombina. *Vocabulario castellano-zapoteco*. México: Oficina tip. de la Secretaría de fomento, México 1893.
- Aguirre Beltrán, Gonzalo. *Regiones de Refugio: El Desarrollo de La Comunidad Y El Proceso Dominical En Mestizo América*. México: Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 1973.
- Alcina Franch, José. *Calendario y religión entre los zapotecos*. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1993.
- Alvarado Tezozómoc, Fernando, Mario Mariscal, and Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. *Crónica mexicana*. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma, 1943.
- Augur, Helen. *Zapotec*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1954.
- Avalos, Francisco. "The Legal Personality of the Colonial Period of México." *Law Library Journal* 83, no. 2 (1991): 393–400.
- Aveni, Anthony F, C. L. N Ruggles, and Gary Urton, eds. *Skywatching in the Ancient World: New Perspectives in Cultural Astronomy: Studies in Honor of Anthony F. Aveni*. Boulder, Colo.: University Press of Colorado, 2007.
- Barriga Rivas, Rogelio. *Guelaguetza, Novela Oaxaqueña*. México D.F., Editorial Cortés, 1947.
- . *La Mayordomía*. México, D.F., Ediciones Botas, 1952.

- Barriga Villanueva, Rebeca, and Esther Herrera. *Lenguas, estructuras y hablantes: estudios en homenaje a Thomas C. Smith Stark*. El Colegio de México, Centro de Estudios Lingüísticos y Literarios, 2014.
- Baskes, Jeremy. *Indians, Merchants, and Markets: A Reinterpretation of the Repartimiento and Spanish-Indian Economic Relations in Colonial Oaxaca, 1750-1821*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2000.
- Beals, Ralph L. "Gifting, Reciprocity, Savings, and Credit in Peasant Oaxaca." *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 26, no. 3 (October 1, 1970): 231–41.
- Bernal, Ignacio, Román Piña Chan, Fernando Cámara Barbachano, and Jay I. Kislak Reference Collection (Library of Congress) Museo Nacional de Antropología (México). *3000 Years of Art and Life in México, as Seen in the National Museum of Anthropology, México City*. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1968.
- Blomster, Jeffrey P. *After Monte Albán: Transformation and Negotiation in Oaxaca, México*. Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2008.
- Boone, Elizabeth Hill, Gary Urton, and Dumbarton Oaks. *Their Way of Writing: Scripts, Signs, and Pictographies in Pre-Columbian America*. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2011.
- Boos, Frank. *The Ceramic Sculptures of Ancient Oaxaca*. South Brunswick [N.J.: A.S. Barnes, 1966.
———. *Colecciones Leigh, Museo Frissell De Arte Zapoteca, Smithsonian Institution Y Otras*. Corpus Antiquitatum Americanensium 3. México: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1968.
- Bos, Anne. "The demise of the caciques of Atlacomulco, México, 1598-1821: a reconstruction." Research School of CNWS, School of Asian, African, and Amerindian Studies, 1998.
- Brandes, Stanley H. *Power and Persuasion: Fiestas and Social Control in Rural México*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988.
- Brulotte, Ronda L. *Between Art and Artifact: Archaeological Replicas and Cultural Production in Oaxaca, México*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012.
- Bullock, W. *Six Months' Residence and Travels in México; Containing Remarks on the Present State of New Spain, Its Natural Productions, State of Society, Manufactures, Trade, Agriculture, and Antiquities*. Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1971.
- Burgoa, Francisco de. *Geográfica descripción de la parte septentrional del Polo Ártico de la América y nueva iglesia de las Indias Occidentales y sitio astronómico de esta Provincia de Predicadores de Antequera, Valle de Oaxaca*. México: Editorial Porrúa, 1989.

- Cantú, Roberto, and Aaron Huey Sonnenschein, eds. *Tradition and Innovation in Mesoamerican Cultural History: A Homage to Tatiana A. Proskouriakoff*. Muenchen: LINCOM Europa, 2011.
- Carballo, David M. "Advances in the Household Archaeology of Highland Mesoamerica." *Journal of Archaeological Research* 19, no. 2 (June 1, 2011): 133–89.
- Caso, Alfonso. *Lapidaria Y Orfebrería En Oaxaca*. 1. ed. Valores de Oaxaca. Oaxaca: Casa de la Cultura Oaxaqueña : Dirección de Comunicación Social del Gobierno del Estado, 1990.
- . *Reyes y reinos de la mixteca / Alfonso Caso*. 1. ed. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica-1979, 1977.
- . *Urnas De Oaxaca*. Memorias Del Instituto Nacional de Antropología E Historia 2. México: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1952.
- . *Las Estelas Zapotecas*. Monografías Del Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia Y Etnografía. México: Talleres gráficos de la nación, 1928.
- Cata, Víctor. *Libana*. Oaxaca de Juárez, México: s.n., 2012.
- Chance, John K. *Conquest of the Sierra: Spaniards and Indians in Colonial Oaxaca*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989.
- . *Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1978.
- Chance, John K., and William B. Taylor. "Cofradías and Cargos: An Historical Perspective on the Mesoamerican Civil-Religious Hierarchy." *American Ethnologist* 12, no. 1 (February 1, 1985): 1–26.
- Chase, Diane Z, and Arlen F Chase. *Mesoamerican Elites: An Archaeological Assessment*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.
- Cline, S. L. *Colonial Culhuacan, 1580-1600: A Social History of an Aztec Town*, 1986.
- Coe, Michael D, and Rex Koontz. *México: From the Olmecs to the Aztecs*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2013.
- Cohen, Jeffrey H. *Cooperation and Community: Economy and Society in Oaxaca*. 1st ed. Austin, Tex: University of Texas Press, 1999.
- Cordero Avendaño de Durand, Carmen. *Interpretación Y Estudio Del Lienzo De San Juan Chicomezúchitl: El Mapa O Pintura De Los Cogues O Señores*. 1. ed. Oaxaca: Instituto Oaxaqueño de las Culturas, Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 2004.
- Córdova, Fray Juan de. *Arte del idioma zapoteco*. Impreso en casa de Pedro Balli, 1578.
- Córdova, Fray Juan de. *Vocabulario en lengua zapoteca*. México: Impreso por Pedro Charte y Antonio Ricardo, 1578.
- Cortés, Hernán. *Hernán Cortés: Letters from México*. New York: Grossman, 1971.

- Cortés Moreno, Maximiano. *Guía de usos y costumbres*. Madrid: Edelsa, 2003.
- Cruz, Víctor de la. *El pensamiento de los binnigula'sa': cosmovisión, religión y calendario con especial referencia a los binnizá*. México, D.F.; Santa María Ixcotel, Oaxaca: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia : Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS) : Casa Juan Pablos ; Instituto Estatal de Educación Pública de Oaxaca, 2007.
- Cruz, Víctor de la, and Marcus Winter. *La religión de los Binnigula'sa'*. Oaxaca: Fondo Editorial, IEEPO, 2002.
- Cruz López, Beatriz. *Pueblos en movimiento: conflicto y poder en el valle de Tlacolula, Oaxaca, durante la época colonial*. Zamora, Michoacán: El Colegio de Michoacán, 2012.
- Dietler, Michael. *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power*. Tuscaloosa, Ala: University of Alabama Press, 2010.
- Durán, Fray Diego. *Book of the Gods and Rites and The Ancient Calendar*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971.
- Durkheim, Emile. *Durkheim on Religion: A Selection of Readings with Bibliographies*. London ; Boston: Routledge & K. Paul, 1975.
- . *Primitive Classification*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963.
- . *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life a Study in Religious Sociology*. London : New York: G. Allen & Unwin; Macmillan, 1915.
- Esteva, Gustavo, and Arturo Guerrero. "Guelaguetza and Tu Chha'ia: A Zapotec Perspective of What Others Call Friendship." *The Palgrave International Handbook of Peace Studies: A Cultural Perspective*, 2011, 352–72.
- Farriss, Nancy M. *Maya Society under Colonial Rule: The Collective Enterprise of Survival*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984.
- Feinman, Gary M, and Linda M Nicholas. "Settlement Patterns of the Ejutla Valley, Oaxaca, México: A Diachronic Macroscale Perspective." *Fant Fieldiana Anthropology*, 2013, 1–330.
- Feria, Pedro de. *Doctrina cristiana en lengua española y zapoteca*. México, 1567.
- Fields, Virginia M, et al. *Children of the Plumed Serpent: The Legacy of Quetzalcoatl in Ancient México*. Los Angeles, CA: Scala Publishers ; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2012.
- Flannery, Kent V. *Guilá Naquitz: Archaic Foraging and Early Agriculture in Oaxaca, México*. Orlando: Academic Press, 1986.
- Flannery, Kent V, and Joyce Marcus. *The Cloud People: Divergent Evolution of the Zapotec and Mixtec Civilizations*. New York: Academic Press, 1983.

- . *Zapotec Civilization: How Urban Society Evolved in Mexico's Oaxaca Valley*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1996.
- . *Excavations at San José Mogote I: the household archaeology*. Ann Arbor: Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan, 2005.
- Foreman, John O. "The Morphosyntax of Subject in Macuiltianguis Zapotec" (PhD Thesis, UCLA, 2006).
- Gage, Thomas, and Arthur Percival Newton. *Thomas Gage, the English-American: A New Survey of the West Indies, 1648*. Guatemala City: El Patio, 1946.
- Galant, Michael Rene. *Comparative Constructions in Spanish and San Lucas Quiavini Zapotec*. München: Lincom Europa, 2006.
- . "Kinship Terms in Colonial Valley Zapotec." In Cantú & Sonnenschein (2011), 65-73.
- Galindo y Villa, Jesús. *Algo Sobre Los Zapotecas Y Los Edificios De Mitla: Conferencia De Vulgarización Dada*. Conferencias Del Museo Nacional. México: Impr. del Museo Nacional, 1905.
- García Pimentel, Luis. *Relación de los obispados de Tlaxcala, Michoacán, Oaxaca y otros lugares en el siglo XVI, manuscrito de la colección del señor don Joaquín García Icazbalceta; publícalo por primera vez su hijo Luis García Pimentel*. Méjico, En casa del editor, 1904.
- Gay, José Antonio. *Historia de Oaxaca*,. México: Impr. del Comercio, de Dublan y ca, 1881.
- Gerhard, Peter. *A Guide to the Historical Geography of New Spain*. Cambridge Latin American Studies 14. Cambridge [Eng.]: University Press, 1972.
- Gibson, Charles. *The Aztecs under Spanish Rule; a History of the Indians of the Valley of México, 1519-1810*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1964.
- . *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century*. Oxford U.P, 1952.
- González, Roberto J. *Zapotec Science: Farming and Food in the Northern Sierra of Oaxaca*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001.
- Graeber, David. *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.
- Granovetter, Mark S. "The Strength of Weak Ties." *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 6 (May 1, 1973): 1360–80.
- Hanks, William F. *Converting Words: Maya in the Age of the Cross*. The Anthropology of Christianity 6. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.
- Hanks, William F, and Don Stephen Rice. *Word and Image in Maya Culture: Explorations in Language, Writing, and Representation*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1989.

- Haskett, Robert Stephen. *Indigenous Rulers: An Ethnohistory of Town Government in Colonial Cuernavaca*. 1st ed. Albuquerque: University of New México Press, 1991.
- Hassig, Ross. *Trade, Tribute, and Transportation: The Sixteenth-Century Political Economy of the Valley of México*. 1st ed. Civilization of the American Indian Series, v. 171. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985.
- Howes, David. *Sensual Relations: Engaging the Senses in Culture and Social Theory*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003.
- Hunn, Eugene S. *A Zapotec Natural History Trees, Herbs, and Flowers, Birds, Beasts, and Bugs in the Life of San Juan Gbëë*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008.
- Jansen, Maarten E. R. G. N. *The Mixtec Pictorial Manuscripts: Time, Agency, and Memory in Ancient México*. The Early Americas : History and Culture, v. 1. Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2011.
- Jansen, Maarten E. R. G. N, Luis Reyes García, Gabina Aurora Pérez Jiménez, and Ferdinand Anders. *Códice Zouche-Nuttall*. España; Austria; México: Sociedad Estatal Quinto Centenario ; Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt ; Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1992.
- Jiménez, Robert T., and Patrick H. Smith. "Mesoamerican Literacies: Indigenous Writing Systems and Contemporary Possibilities." *Reading Research Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (January 1, 2008): 28–46.
- Joyce, Rosemary A., and John S. Henderson. "Beginnings of Village Life in Eastern Mesoamerica." *Latin American Antiquity* 12, no. 1 (March 1, 2001): 5–23.
- Justeson, John. "Colonial Zapotec Calendars and Calendrical Astronomy," in Aveni et al. (eds.). *Skywatching in the Ancient World: New Perspectives in Cultural Astronomy*. Boulder CO: University of Boulder Colorado Press, 2015.
- Katz, Friedrich. *The Secret War in Mexico: Europe, the United States, and the Mexican Revolution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
- Kirkby, Anne V. T. *The Use of Land and Water Resources in the Past and Present, Valley of Oaxaca, México*. Prehistory and Human Ecology of the Valley of Oaxaca, v. 1. Ann Arbor: Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan, 1973.
- Kowalewski, Stephen A. "Scale and the Explanation of Demographic Change: 3,500 Years in the Valley of Oaxaca." *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 105, no. 2 (June 1, 2003): 313–25.
- Kubler, George. *The Art and Architecture of Ancient America : The Mexican, Maya, and Andean Peoples / George Kubler*. 2d ed. Baltimore: Penguin, 1975.
- Landa, Diego de, and Anthony Pagden. *Landa's Account of the Affairs of Yucatán: The Maya*. Chicago, Ill.: O'Hara, 1975.

- Lee, Felicia. "Antisymmetry and the Syntax of San Lucas Quiaviní Zapotec (Ph.D. Thesis, UCLA, 1999).
- León, Nicolás, and México. *Lyobaá Ó Mictlán; Guía Histórico-Descriptiva*. México: Tipografía y literatura La Europea, 1901.
- León-Portilla, Ascensión H. de, Horacio Carochi, Juan Bautista, Pedro de Arenas, Francisco de Ávila, José Agustín Aldama y Guevara, Bartolomé de Alva Ixtlilxochilt, et al. *Obras clásicas sobre la lengua náhuatl*. Madrid: Fundación Histórica Tavera : DIGIBIS : Mapfre Mutualidad, 1998.
- León Portilla, Miguel. *Los Glifos Toponímicos En La Historia de Mesoamérica: Siglos III a.C.-XVI d.C.* Guadalajara, Jalisco: Secretaria de Educación y Cultura, 1990.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *Anthropology and Myth: Lectures, 1951-1982*. New York, NY: Blackwell, 1987.
- Lillehaugen, Brook Danielle. "Expressing Location in Tlacolula Valley Zapotec" (Ph.D. Thesis, UCLA 2006).
- Lockhart, James. *The Nahuas after the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central México, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1992.
- . "The Social History of Colonial Spanish America: Evolution and Potential," *Latin American Research Review* 7, no. 1 (1972).
- López Cruz, Ausencia, Michael Swanton, eds. *Memorias del coloquio Francisco Belmar*. Oaxaca, México; México, D.F.: Biblioteca Francisco de Burgoa : Colegio Superior para la Educación Integral Intercultural de Oaxaca : Fundación Alfred Harp Helú ; Instituto Nacional de Lenguas Indígenas, 2008.
- López de Gómara, Francisco. *Historia de la conquista de México*. México, DF, Editorial Pedro Robredo, 1943.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea*. Prospect Heights, Ill: Waveland Press, 1984.
- Marcus, Joyce, and Kent V Flannery. *Zapotec Civilization: How Urban Society Evolved in México's Oaxaca Valley*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1996.
- Marcus, Joyce, Judith Francis Zeitlin, and Ronald Spores. *Caciques and Their People: A Volume in Honor of Ronald Spores*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan, 1994.

- Martínez Calvo, Pascual. *Diccionario enciclopédico y etimológico: origen de instituciones, usos y costumbres, étnico, histórico y literario, geográfico y biográfico, mítico y religioso*. Zaragoza: Martínez Calvo, Pascual, 2005.
- Martínez Gracida, Manuel. *Catálogo etimológico de los nombres de los pueblos, haciendas y ranchos del estado de Oaxaca*. Oaxaca: Imprenta del estado en el ex-obispado, dirigida por I. Candiani, 1883.
- Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift; Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. London: Cohen & West, 1966.
- . *Manual of Ethnography*. New York ; Oxford: Durkheim Press/Berghahn Books, 2007.
- Melville, Elinor G. K. *A Plague of Sheep: Environmental Consequences of the Conquest of México*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Miller, Arthur G. *The Painted Tombs of Oaxaca, México: Living with the Dead*. RES Monographs on Anthropology and Aesthetics. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Monaghan, John. *The Covenants with Earth and Rain: Exchange, Sacrifice, and Revelation in Mixtec Sociality*. The Civilization of the American Indian Series, v. 219. Norman, Okla: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995.
- . “Fiesta Finance in Mesoamerica and the Origins of a Gift Exchange System.” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute : Incorporating “Man”* 2 (1996): 499–516.
- . *Ethnology*. 1st ed. Supplement to the Handbook of Middle American Indians, v. 6. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000.
- Monzón, Rendón, and Juan José. “Nuevos datos sobre el origen del vocabulario en lengua zapoteca del padre Córdova.” *Anales de Antropología* 6, no. 1 (January 20, 2011).
- Mühlenpfordt, Eduard, Juan Antonio Ortega y Medina, and Jesús Monjarás-Ruiz. *Los palacios de los zapotecos en Mitla*. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1984.
- Munro, Pamela, and Felipe H Lopez. *Di'csyonaary X:tè'n Dii'zh Sah Sann Lu'uc = San Lucas Quiavini Zapotec Dictionary*. Los Ángeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Publications, 1999.
- Nebrija, Antonio de. *Gramática Castellana, 1492*. Madrid: Junta del Centenario, 1946.
- Nichols, Deborah L, and Christopher A Pool. *The Oxford Handbook of Mesoamerican Archaeology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Nigh, Ronald Byron. “Evolutionary Ecology of Maya Agriculture in Highland Chiapas, México.” Stanford University, 1977.

- Oudjik, Michel R. *Historiography of the Bènzàa*. CNWS Publications, v. 84. Leiden: Research School of Asian, Africa, and Amerindian Studies, Universiteit Leiden, 2000.
- . “Una Nueva Historia Zapoteca” in *Secretos del Mundo Zapoteca* edited by Eva E. Ramírez Gasga, 267-321. Tehuantepec e Ixtepec, Oaxaca: Universidad del Istmo, 2008.
- . *El texto más antiguo en zapoteco*. Tlalocan 15. México, D.F.: UNAM 2008: 227-40.
- Parsons, Elsie Worthington Clews. *Mitla, Town of the Souls: And Other Zapoteco-Speaking Pueblos of Oaxaca, México*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1936.
- Peeler, Damon E., and Marcus Winter. “Building J at Monte Alban: A Correction and Reassessment of the Astronomical Hypothesis.” *Latin American Antiquity* 6, no. 4 (December 1, 1995): 362–69. Doi:10.2307/971838.
- Pohl, John M. D. “For Translation: Eastern Nahua-Mixtec-Zapotec Confederacy 1200-1600.” (Ms. 2013)
- . *Sorcerers’ of the Fifth Heaven: Nahua Art and Ritual of Ancient Southern México*. PLAS Cuadernos, no. 9. Princeton, N.J: Program in Latin American Studies, Princeton University, and Princeton University Art Museum, 2007.
- . *The Politics of Symbolism in the Mixtec Codices*. Vanderbilt University Publications in Anthropology, no. 46. Nashville, Tenn: Vanderbilt University, 1994.
- Pohl, John M. D., and Claire L. Lyons. *The Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire*. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010.
- Ramírez Gasga, Eva E, ed. *Secretos del mundo zapoteca*. Tehuantepec e Ixtepec, Oax. [Mexico]: Universidad del Istmo, 2008.
- Restall, Matthew. *The Maya World: Yucatec Culture and Society, 1550-1850*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997.
- . “Heirs to the Hieroglyphs: Indigenous Writing in Colonial Mesoamerica,” *The Americas* 54, no. 2 (1997).
- . “A History of the New Philology and the New Philology in History,” *Latin American Research Review* 38, no. 1 (2003).
- Rodríguez Ruelas, Ismael. *Ánimas Trujano el hombre importante*. México: Películas Rodríguez, 1962.
- Romero Frizzi, Ma. de los Ángeles. *Economía Y Vida De Los Españoles En La Mixteca Alta, 1519-1720*. 1. ed. Colección Regiones de México. México, D.F: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia : Gobierno del Estado de Oaxaca, 1990.
- . *El Sol Y La Cruz: Los Pueblos Indios De Oaxaca Colonial*. 1. ed. Historia de Los Pueblos Indígenas de México. Tlalpan, D.F. [México] : Col. Alpes, D.F. [México]: CIESAS ; INI, 1996.
- . *Escritura zapoteca: 2,500 años de historia*. México: CIESAS : Porrúa : CONACULTA, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2003.

- Ruiz, Teófilo F. *A King Travels Festive Traditions in Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.
- . *Spain's Centuries of Crisis: 1300-1474*. Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Pub., 2007.
- . *Spanish Society, 1400-1600*. Harlow, England; New York: Longman, 2001.
- Ruiz Medrano, Ethelia, and Susan Kellogg. *Negotiation within Domination: New Spain's Indian Pueblos Confront the Spanish State*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2010.
- Sahagún, Bernardino de. *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España, por el m.r.p. Fr. Bernardino de Sahagún, de la Orden de los frailes menores de la observancia*. México, DF, Publicador Robredo, 1938.
- Schroeder, Susan, Stephanie Gail Wood, and Robert Stephen Haskett. *Indian Women of Early México*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997.
- Siméon, Rémi. *Diccionario de la lengua náhuatl o mexicana*. México: Siglo Veintiuno, 1977.
- Skirius, John. "Barreda, Vasconcelos, and Mexican Educational Reforms." *Aztlan--International Journal of Chicano Studies Research* 14, no. 2 (1983): 307–41.
- . *José Vasconcelos y la cruzada de 1929*. México: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1978.
- Smith, Mary Elizabeth, and Elizabeth Hill Boone, eds. *Painted Books and Indigenous Knowledge in Mesoamerica: Manuscript Studies in Honor of Mary Elizabeth Smith*. New Orleans: Middle American Research Institute, 2005.
- Smith Stark, Thomas Cedric. *Dioses, sacerdotes y sacrificio una mirada a la religión zapoteca a través del vocabulario en lengua zapoteca, [sic] 1578 de Juan de Córdova*. México: El Colegio de México, Centro de Estudios Lingüísticos y Literarios, 2000.
- Sonnenschein, Aaron Huey. "A Descriptive Grammar of San Bartolomé Zoogocho Zapotec" (PhD Thesis, USC, 2004).
- Spores, Ronald. *The Mixtecs in Ancient and Colonial Times*. The Civilization of the American Indian Series, v. 168. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984.
- Staller, John E., and Michael D. Carrasco. "Pre-Columbian Foodways in Mesoamerica." In *Pre-Columbian Foodways*, edited by John Staller and Michael Carrasco, 1–20. New York, NY: Springer, 2010.
- Starr, Jean E. F. "La Conversión Religiosa Y Las Cofradías Entre Los Zapotecas de Los Valles Centrales de Oaxaca. Análisis de Una Disertación Presentada En Londres Durante El Coloquio En Honor Del Profesor José Alcina Franch." *Historia Mexicana* 54, no. 3 (January 1, 2005): 867–87.
- . "Ideal Models and the Reality: From Cofradia to Mayordomía in the Valles Centrales of Oaxaca, México." PhD, University of Glasgow, 1993.

- Stoller, Paul. *The Taste of Ethnographic Things: The Senses in Anthropology*. University of Pennsylvania Press Contemporary Ethnography Series. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989.
- Summerhill, William Roderick. *Inglorious Revolution: Political Institutions, Sovereign Debt, and Financial Underdevelopment in Imperial Brazil*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 2015.
- . *Order against Progress: Government, Foreign Investment, and Railroads in Brazil, 1854-1913*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003.
- Tavárez, David Eduardo. *The Invisible War: Indigenous Devotions, Discipline, and Dissent in Colonial México*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2011.
- Taylor, William B. *Drinking, Homicide & Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1979.
- . *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1972.
- . *Magistrates of the Sacred: Priests and Parishioners in Eighteenth-Century México*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1996.
- . *Marvels & Miracles in Late Colonial México: Three Texts in Context*. Religions of the Americas. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2011.
- Terraciano, Kevin. “Indigenous Peoples in Colonial Spanish American Society,” in Holloway, Thomas H. (ed.) *A Companion to Latin American History*. Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, UK, 2011, 124–45.
- . *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca : Ñudzahui History, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001.
- . “The Colonial Mixtec Community.” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 80, no. 1 (2000): 1–42.
- . “Three views of the Conquest of Mexico from the Other Mexica” in *The Conquest All over Again: Nahuas and Zapotecs Thinking, Writing, and Painting Spanish Colonialism*. First Nations and the Colonial Encounter. Eastbourne, England ; Portland, Oregon: Sussex Academic Press, 2010.
- . “Writing to the Rescue: How a Zapotec Community Used Native-Language Documents to Defend its Lands”. In *Tradition and Innovation in Mesoamerican Cultural History*, ed. by Roberto Cantú and Aaron Sonnenschein. Lincom Studies in Anthropology, 16. Munich: Lincom Europa, 2011
- Townsend, Richard F. *The Aztecs*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1992.
- Truex, Gregory F. “‘Barrio’ as a Metaphor for Zapotec Social Structure.” *Ethnology* 35, no. 3 (July 1, 1996): 203–13. doi:10.2307/3773919.
- University of Calgary. *Pre-Columbian Foodways Interdisciplinary Approaches to Food, Culture, and Markets in Ancient Mesoamerica*. New York: Springer, 2009.
- Urcid, Javier. *Zapotec Hieroglyphic Writing*. Studies in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology, no. 34. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001.

- Van Doesburg, Sebastián. *Pictografía y escritura alfabética en Oaxaca*. Oaxaca, México: Instituto Estatal de Educación Pública de Oaxaca, 2008.
- Vargas, Alberto. *Guelaguetza; costumbre racial oaxaqueña*. Oaxaca: Imprenta del Gobierno del Estado, 1935.
- Wake, Eleanor. *Framing the Sacred: The Indian Churches of Early Colonial México*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010.
- Waterbury, Laura R. "In a Land with Two Laws: Spanish and Indigenous Justice in Eighteenth Century Oaxaca, Mexico", Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2005.
- Waterbury, Ronald George. "The Traditional Market in a Provincial Urban Setting: Oaxaca, Mexico." Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1969.
- Weiner, Annette B. *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
- Wells, E. Christian. "Recent Trends in Theorizing Prehispanic Mesoamerican Economies." *Journal of Archaeological Research* 14, no. 4 (December 1, 2006): 265–312.
- Whitecotton, Joseph W. *Zapotec Elite Ethnohistory: Pictorial Genealogies from Eastern Oaxaca*. Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University, 1990.
- Whitmore, Thomas M. *Disease and Death in Early Colonial México: Simulating Amerindian Depopulation*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1992.
- Williams, Robert Lloyd. *Lord Eight Wind of Suchixtlan and the Heroes of Ancient Oaxaca Reading History in the Codex Zouche-Nuttall*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2009.
- Winter, Cecilia. "Los órganos Históricos de Oaxaca: Una Ventana Al Pasado." *Anuario Dominicano*, no. 2 (2006): 369–400.
- Yannakakis, Yanna. "Indigenous People and Legal Culture in Spanish America." *HIC3 History Compass* 11, no. 11 (2013): 931–47.
- . "'Costumbre,' A Language of Negotiation in Eighteenth Century Oaxaca," in Ethelia Ruiz Medrano and Susan Kellogg, editors, *Negotiation within Domination: Colonial New Spain's Indian Pueblos Confront the Spanish State* (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2010)
- . *The Art of Being in-Between: Native Intermediaries, Indian Identity, and Local Rule in Colonial Oaxaca*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.
- Zeitlin, Judith Francis. *Cultural Politics in Colonial Tehuantepec: Community and State among the Isthmus Zapotec, 1500-1750*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005.
- Zeitlin, Robert N. "The Isthmus and the Valley of Oaxaca: Questions about Zapotec Imperialism in Formative Period Mesoamerica." *American Antiquity* 55, no. 2 (April 1, 1990): 250–61.

Zwollo, Tonny. *The Lost Paradise: Architecture and Ecology in the Oaxaca Valley*. Oaxaca, Entre Mitla y Monte Albán, 1993.